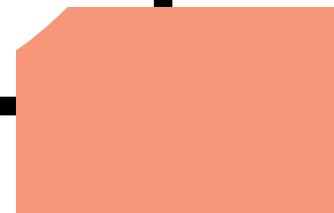
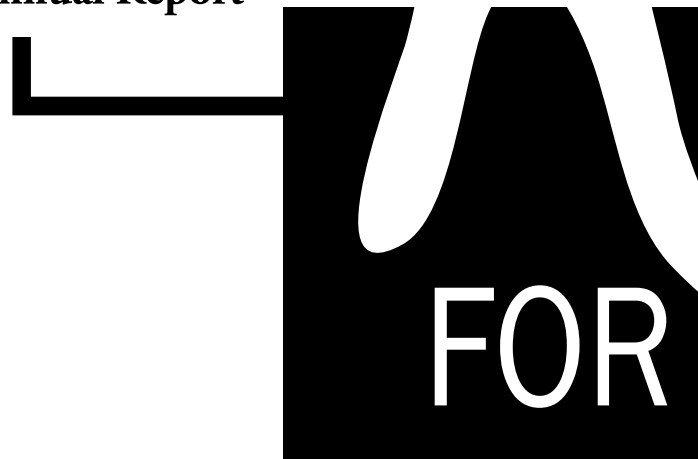


# PARTNERSHIPS



**HERKIMER ARC**  
2013 Annual Report



# FOR

# PEOPLE

## Our Finances (Audited)

### 2013 Income by Source

<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$22,106,650</b>
Program Related Services	\$17,265,075
Herkimer Industries Sales	\$3,731,130
Fund Development	\$354,375
Goodwill / HARC Store	\$275,140
Other Revenues	\$480,930

### 2013 Total Expense by Type

<b>Total Expenses:</b>	<b>\$21,596,078</b>
Wages	\$10,817,713
Employee Benefits	\$2,650,066
Program Related Expenses	\$7,403,857
Other Expenses	\$724,442

**Net Surplus: \$510,572**

### 2012 Income by Source

<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$22,022,637</b>
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

### 2012 Total Expense by Type

<b>Total Expenses:</b>	<b>\$22,278,200</b>
Wages	\$10,878,463
Employee Benefits	\$3,507,020
Program Related Expenses	\$7,273,278
Other Expenses	\$619,439

**Net Deficit: (\$255,563)**

**Annual Report Design & Layout:**  
**Anne Santry**

**Editorial, Photography & Layout:**  
**Joan Wishod Reardon**

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**For more info. visit:**  
**Herkimer ARC**  
**www.herkimerarc.org**

**Herkimer Industries:**  
**www.herkimerindustries.com**

**New York International Wine Auction:**  
**www.nyiwa.com**

**Advanced Technologies:**  
**www.advancedtechsafety.com**



## Our 2013 Board of Directors

### Officers

**Gary Ruff**  
Board Chair  
**Dr. Steven Crane**  
Vice Chair  
**Robert Watkins**  
Secretary

**Ronald George**  
Treasurer  
**Harrison Hummel IV**  
Past Chair

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**Anthony DeLuca**  
**Jeanne De Paredes**  
**Stephanie Dyer**  
**Sam Geloso**

**Ralph Hale**  
**Marion Lawrence**  
**Marjorie Reese**  
**Jean Smith**  
**Brian Wedemeyer**

### Board Member Emeritus

**Anthony Bonvino**

### President/CEO

**Kevin Crosley**

## Our Mission

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

# Partnerships For People

A Message from our President/CEO and Board Chair...

Keep moving forward. Those words are never more important in the history of our field than right now. We are faced with incredible challenges, a changing industry, and people in need of supports and services at an all time high. We view partnerships as a key to our success.

We will continue our forward movement in spite of the challenges we face. As 2013 progressed, we realized we needed to make some serious changes, and we did. As a result, we came through the year leaner, but stronger. We finished 2013 with a flurry and a momentum to carry us into the New Year.

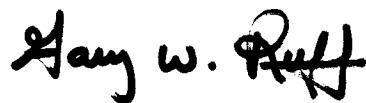
Our next chapter is yet to be written, but with the vast number of initiatives in the pipeline, our extremely talented staff, and our dedicated Board of Directors, we continue to be optimistic regardless of the current environment. Failure is not an option, as too many individuals are counting on us for success.

Managed Care is coming and we need to be ready. We are positioning ourselves properly and will continue to do so as we seek new and exciting opportunities to explore. I know you're all with us and we need your support and assistance as we develop our world further and carry out our very important mission.

Sincerely,



**Kevin Crosley**  
President/CEO



**Gary Ruff**  
Board of Directors Chair



**Kevin Crosley**



**Gary Ruff**

## Partnering to Create a Regional Asset



*HARC Community Park Campaign Committee members include, seated from left, Campaign Chairs Frank Annesse and Chip Hummel. Standing from left, Martin Babinec, Marge Reese, Linda Tharp, Herkimer ARC President/CEO Kevin Crosley, Leighton Burns, Rich Rhymestine, and David Bonacci. Missing from photo: George Aney, Joe Ahern, Jim Brock, Karen Filipski, Donna Goodbread, David Manzelman, Johannes Neckermann, and Gary Scalzo.*

The Herkimer ARC has been a source of support to families in the region since 1969. In 2013, the agency embarked on an exciting project to expand its reach to include all members of the community with the creation of a fully accessible, integrated park facility that will provide important opportunities for persons with and without disabilities. The vision of the park is to "enrich lives throughout the region by bringing together people of all ages and abilities for a unique recreational, wellness, and social experience that fosters community for all."

HARC Community Park, with a price tag of \$1 million, will be located behind the HARC Business Park, 420 E. German Street in Herkimer. It will be one of only four upstate New York accessible parks, and the only accessible park in the region with access to a pool. The park will include: athletic fields, fitness trails, and fitness stations for people of all abilities, multi-generational play areas, basketball court, softball field, covered and lighted bocce courts, picnic pavilion, bandstand, rest rooms, and concession stand. Planned programs include wheelchair/partner softball, sit/stand aerobic classes, wheelchair basketball, adapted aquatics, adapted sports programs, scheduled concerts, Bocce leagues, farmers market and craft fair, and more.

The Herkimer ARC is grateful to a dedicated group of individuals, who have been working to create both community and financial support for the project. The group has concluded there is great support for the park and it has generated excitement for those who hear about it!

Those who have dedicated time to the project in 2013 include: HARC Community Park Campaign Co-Chairs George Aney, Frank Annesse, and Chip Hummel. The HARC Community Park Campaign Committee includes: Joe Ahern, Martin Babinec, David Bonacci, Jim Brock, Leighton Burns, Karen Filipski, Donna Goodbread, David Manzelmann, Johannes Neckermann, Marge Reese, Rich Rhymestine, Gary Scalzo, and Linda Tharp. Herkimer ARC representatives include: Kevin Crosley, Dominic Frank, Jackie Lewis, and Frank Reid.

HARC Community Park Campaign Co-Chair Chip Hummel, commented: "I grew up in that park. I played ball there, and all my kids spent their youth there. This park has been an anchor to my family and that of many of others. This project will bring that park back into the center of community life, but beyond that, it will become a regional destination for families of all abilities to enjoy fitness, fun, and play in a setting that promotes understanding and acceptance."

Herkimer ARC President/CEO Kevin Crosley said, "The Herkimer ARC is on the forefront of innovation and development in our area. The assembled Campaign team for the HARC Community Park serves as a testament of the type of support the Herkimer ARC receives from the community and is representative of the promise and success of this campaign. We already have a significant sum of money committed by individuals and organizations in the region through naming opportunities. We truly look forward to reaching out into the community in 2014 to fund this wonderful community asset project."



## Partnering with Supporters



*Albert Pylinski, seated, third from left, was the successful bidder at NYITWA 2013 for the 2010 Grace Family Vineyards Blank Cabernet Sauvignon. Those congratulating him include, seated from left, Frank Ferrante, Kelly Woods, Albert Pylinski, and Jay Woods. Standing from left, NYITWA Auction Director Tony Vennera, Wine Model Robert Fiorentino, Sommelier Johannes Neckermann, Wine Model Abby Owens, and Herkimer ARC President/CEO Kevin Crosley.*

The 18th Annual New York International Wine Auction (NYITWA), one of the northeast's premier wine events, continues to set records by reaching the highest amount raised at over \$300,000 and attracting the most attendees at the 2013 event.

Proceeds from NYITWA help the Herkimer ARC to support people with disabilities and others to achieve full potential and to live enriched lives.

Herkimer ARC President/CEO Kevin Crosley commented, "Year after year our community continues to astound us with their generosity. Our sponsors and bidders help us to maintain NYITWA as one of the top premier wine and food charity events. Thanks to all of our sponsors, wineries and distributors, wine and fine lifestyle items donors, and the bighearted bidders at our October event, we broke two records by raising the most money ever and attracting the most attendees. Many people have told me they cannot wait to return in 2014!"

Major sponsors for 2013 included: Event Sponsor: Annese & Associates, Inc. Premier Media Sponsors: WUTR-TV, and Syracuse Media Group. Tasting Sponsor: Scalzo, Zogby & Wittig, Inc. Toasting Sponsor: The Bonadio Group. Chateau Sponsors: Neckermann Consulting, and NBT Bank. Auction Paddle Sponsor: Romanelli Communications. Additional high level sponsors included: ConMed Corporation, The Cukierski Family, Jill Rae Signs, Adonis-Avanti Transportation Service, Inc., Jim Brock Agency, Northland Communications, PJ Green, Marrone Photography, First Source Federal Credit Union, REM Fire, Precision Care Software, Omnicare, Inc., Endweld Supply Corporation, and Cleantec.

Dinner wine and water sponsors included: Gregory B. Shankman, MD, Robert Morris, Dr. Dennis and Maryellen Blom, Jim Brock Agency, Leslie Crosley, Donna Goodbread, Janice Owens, John and Jackie Romano, Ilion Wine & Spirits, and Johannes and Ljiljana Neckermann.

## Partnering in a Natural Disaster

The morning of Friday, June 28, 2013 required immediate emergency responses by both Herkimer ARC staff and community resources due to unprecedented flooding in the Mohawk Valley. Many organizations in the community gave assistance for several Herkimer ARC sites, which were filled with water and mud. Special thanks goes to the fire and police departments in Mohawk, the National Guard, and Cleantec, a disaster cleaning company, which responded within hours to help clean thick mud and water at Herkimer Industries so work could resume on Monday.

According to Vice President - Residential Services Shawn Schultz perhaps the biggest heroes of the disaster were the agency's residential staff, facilities maintenance, and transportation staff. "That morning was surreal for our folks," Schultz said. "I could not be more proud of our direct support staff, who were assisted by local police and fire crews to evacuate our Devendorf residents in the early morning due to high rising waters. This is something you don't think you would face at work—to be responsible to safely evacuate five people from their home. They remained calm and drove the folks to our main administration site and then began calling for assistance."

Schultz explained that through the day, many employees responded and stepped up to help move out the individuals to the agency's weekend Respite House. "We want to thank the respite services families for being so patient while these individuals lived there. We want to thank the community and National Guard. We give special thanks to our maintenance and transportation departments for their evacuation assistance and months of hard work to rebuild and prepare for everyone to come back home. We hope we never have to go through this again, but we know if we do, many are willing to help." she added.



*Flooding in Herkimer, NY on June 2013.*

## Partnering for Community

The HARC Business Park, a 120,000 sq. ft. former industrial facility located in Herkimer, NY, continues to thrive as it is converted from a community eyesore to a community asset.

Manufacturing space was reorganized in 2013 to provide more efficient work centers for packaging, spool refurbishing, and industrial projects for three major companies—which ultimately helped to achieve revenue records. Projects included building, gluing, and packaging boxes for a gun manufacturer, shrink-wrapping and packaging facial tissues, and refurbishing and packing industrial spools. Those three projects increased revenue by 64 percent in 2013.

High quality renovations to the commercial space continue to help the agency to attract new small business tenants. The agency rented space to 13 businesses in 2013, and expects to buildout for several new tenants in 2014. A new business to the site, HollieWood Dance and Fitness, offers personal training, Zumba, and more, and attracts 100 or more students for classes each week. Other new tenants include a physicians and law offices, Fiberdyne, Inc., Northland Networks, and the Red Cross.

"From the beginning, the entire project has been a partnership with our community. Visitors are consistently amazed by the transformations of this historical building," commented President/CEO Kevin Crosley. "The business park continues to achieve just what we planned and hoped for—new business revenue helps the agency to offset the lack of increases in government funding, the site has become a center for small business incubation, and we've created a integrated work setting and maintained 63 jobs for individuals."

HARC Business Park Production Manager Burt Belden, said, "We achieved record numbers for our projects because overall this site is a very positive place to work. People want to come to work and they enjoy what they do. We have great stories like Ben Anthony, who has worked here since the opening on the Albany International Project. He has done such a good job, he is in the process of becoming a full time Herkimer ARC employee as a production worker."

Herkimer ARC also got exciting news in December 2013. The Office of Governor Andrew Cuomo announced the agency has been awarded \$250,000 through the Regional Economic Development initiative to fund window installation and refurbishment at the HARC Business Park. The windows are part of major and ongoing renovations, which have been made to the industrial site since the agency took possession in late 2009. Transformations have been steady such as paving the parking lot, replacing 38 windows to date, installing a passenger elevator, refurbishing manufacturing floors, and the building out of 10,000 sq. feet of office space. The new windows will transform the exterior appearance of the building, increase efficiency for a new HVAC system, line up additional business tenants looking for office or manufacturing space, and ultimately, create new job opportunities by relocating Herkimer Industries' Sewing Services and expanding capabilities with one or more current customers.



*Thirty eight new windows were installed at the facility to date for office renovations (see bottom windows). With a \$250,000 grant, the remaining old windows will be replaced. The Business Park will continue its transformation to remain a community asset—especially for the those living in the neighborhood.*



*Ben Anthony began working at the HARC Business Park in 2009. Currently, he is becoming a full-time Herkimer ARC employee working as a production worker. "I have learned many things: how to run equipment like the stacker and electric pallet jack," Anthony said. "I worked hard to get this job. I like to go, go—so this job is perfect!"*



## Partnering with Industry

Herkimer Industries (HI), a division of the Herkimer ARC, had an overall increase of sales of 20 percent in 2013. Work opportunities for 150 workers continue to increase with major assembly and packaging projects for Revision Eyewear, Timbar, Fiberdyne Labs, Inc., Tidy Tot Diapers, Otis Technology, Radiator Labors, Albany International and Irving Paper, among others. Additionally, in meeting the 2013 equipment and uniform needs of New York State agencies, and including LED sales, HI boosted state contract sales by 75 percent to achieve a record year. The Herkimer Industries' Industrial Sewing division helped outfit New York State law enforcement recruits with uniforms.

Herkimer Industries (HI) and commercial partner, Fiberdyne Labs, Inc. are leaders in the LED business with installations of LED billboards at schools and other projects throughout the state, and by creating Intelligent Transportation System Signage. Beginning in December 2013, LED Wrong-Way signs and other signage are being installed at exits along the NYS Thruway and serious wrong-way crashes are expected to be reduced.

Since acquiring Advanced Technologies in June 2011, sales in 2013 reached the highest level in the safety company's history. Records sales were achieved with both the retail store in Herkimer, NY and an e-commerce site: [www.advancedtechsafety.com](http://www.advancedtechsafety.com). Advanced Tech is a division of the Herkimer ARC and is a supplier of safety equipment to fire, rescue, EMS, law enforcement, commercial, and industrial customers with a storefront at 246 N. Main St., Herkimer. Workers at Herkimer Industries assist the store with both sewing and packaging support. Proceeds from sales help to support services for people with disabilities.



*New York State Thruway employees install a Wrong Way Deterrent Sign system at the Thruway's Buffalo exit in December 2013. Commenting on the installation in Buffalo, Governor Andrew Cuomo said, "New York is the first state in the nation to utilize this sophisticated technology to enhance traffic safety and save lives."*

## Partnering with People

Jason Baylor says Frank Lopata, a Career Connections vocational counselor, and other Herkimer ARC staff, helped him move from working in a supervised vocational setting with a step toward working at a new job that he likes at the HARC Business Park.

The realization that people like Jason Baylor and others in supervised programs could work more independently in settings similar to community work with the right supports was born out of a meeting of the Herkimer ARC Team Building Committee—which brings individuals from the various departments of the agency together to share information. Baylor and others were discussed and a pilot plan was put in place.

Herkimer Industries production staff brought project tasks from the Business Park to Herkimer Industries each day to teach Baylor the skills he needed to put together boxes for a local gun manufacturer and to increase his productivity to the needed levels to meet the demands on the manufacturing floor. By working at the Business Park, Baylor has increased his earnings and paycheck by improving his productivity. Herkimer Industries production staff continue to support Jason to ensure he stays on task and to help him remain more independent at work.

"I love my job," said Baylor with a big smile. "I have met many friends here and I like working with my friends. My supervisor Nora [Romer] helps me a lot too. My buddy Frank [Lopata] really helped me to learn my new job."



*Jason Baylor is part of a pilot program to take individuals out of a supervised vocational setting and place them in a workplace similar to community work. The HARC Business Park supports jobs for individuals with disabilities to work more independently and to increase earnings.*

### Hosting or Sponsoring Workshops

Your organization can host or sponsor a Workshop. Participants will learn to:

1. Describe research based rationale that supports Social Stories™.
2. Provide a brief history of the approach identifying frequent myths and misconceptions to understand the importance of following the specific guidelines of Social Stories™ 10.1.
3. Develop a Social Story™ by gathering information, selecting a template or format, writing text, and selecting illustrations in accordance with 10.1 criteria.
4. Explain how Social Stories™ may be developed to encourage categorization and generalization and how Social Stories™ can be tailored to address specific concerns.

Please contact Lisa Gifford to learn more about pricing and hosting/sponsoring requirements.

### Individualized Consulting

Lisa Gifford, Herkimer ARC Autism Supports and Innovations Director and an authorized Coach of Carol Gray Social Stories™, can provide one to one consultation with parents or care providers to write a Social Story™ specific to the child, teen, or adult needs.

Social Stories™ assists the person with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in understanding rules, routines, upcoming events, or abstract concepts and expectations. Social Stories™ are meant to teach a person, in a positive and patient way, about the world around them.

The goal of a Social Story™ should never be to change the individual's behavior. The story may lead to a greater understanding of events and expectations and thus may lead to more effective interactions. Therefore, if a child, teen or adult is experiencing difficulty with: 1. change; 2. understanding the social rules of respect, body space, and conversation; and/or 3. exhibiting behaviors that seem to result from change or transition, a Social Story™ may be helpful.

Parents/Caregivers, please contact Lisa Gifford to learn more about individualized consulting.

Herkimer ARC Presents:



## Social Stories™

CAROL GRAY

### Bringing Social Stories™ to Parents & Professionals

Creating Real Life Stories...  
Improving Social Communication





help me write  
**my**  
and learn  
**story**  
because  
**is mine.**

## Partnering with National Leaders

The Herkimer ARC remains an area leader in autism education by hosting trainings and therapy programs for professional, area families and individuals on the autism spectrum. In 2013, the agency teamed up with Carol Gray, who is director of The Gray Center for Social Learning and Understanding in Grandville, MI, and who developed Social Stories™ and Comic Strip Conversations—strategies that are used worldwide with children, adolescents, and adults with autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

Lisa Gifford, Herkimer ARC Autism Supports and Innovations director and an authorized coach of Carol Gray Social Stories™, now provides one to one consultation with area parents or care providers to write a Social Story™ specific to the child, teen, or adult needs and she will travel New York State to organizations to host or sponsor Social Stories workshops.

Social Stories™ assists the person with ASD in understanding rules, routines, upcoming events, or abstract concepts and expectations. Social Stories™ are meant to teach a person, in a positive and patient way, about the world around them. The goal of a Social Story™ should never be to change the individual's behavior. The story may lead to a greater understanding of events and expectations and thus may lead to more effective interactions. For more information contact Lisa Gifford at (315) 574-7826 or email: [lgifford@herkimerarc.org](mailto:lgifford@herkimerarc.org).

## Partnering with Area Employers

Career Connections, the employment division of the Herkimer ARC, honored American Food & Vending Co. and their employee, William Jaquish, with a 2013 New York State Office for People with a Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) “Works for Me” award to recognize a business that hires people with disabilities and to honor the contributions of a valued employee.

Herkimer ARC President/CEO Kevin Crosley, said, “It is with great pleasure that we present this award to recognize a community employer and employee, whose relationship serves as a wonderful example that a diversified workforce is important. American Food & Vending is a company that exemplifies an outstanding commitment to assisting individuals with obtaining and maintaining employment. They also assist our efforts to ensure full community integration for everyone.”

Vice President of Day & Community Supports Susan Streeter explained that the food service team is very flexible and dedicated to assisting Jaquish to succeed in his goal to maintain meaningful community employment. “Perhaps the most important outcome of this relationship is that William has become an excellent employee, working at the company for over five years. He is a hard worker and has gained a great working relationship with his coworkers and supervisors,” she said.



*Those on hand from Herkimer ARC to recognize American Food & Vending and William include, from left, Career Connections Employment Specialist Katelynn Maida, Assistant Program Director of Career Connections Robin Mattox, VP - Day and Community Supports Susan Streeter, William Jaquish, American Food & Vending General Manager James Robinson, Career Connections Employment Services Supervisor Amanda Ortiz, and Herkimer ARC President/CEO Kevin Crosley.*



## Partnering with Job Seekers



*Amanda Ortiz, top, Employment Services supervisor, takes a moment to celebrate Stephanie Fitch's employment success in a job she loves and is thriving in at a local school district.*

Thanks to support, like the \$835,000 grant the Herkimer ARC received from the New York State Education Department ACCES-VR (Adult Career and Continuing Education Services - Vocational Rehabilitation), individuals are succeeding at their jobs in the community. The grant will be used over a five-year period with education, rehabilitation, and placement services.

In 2013, Career Connections, the employment division of the Herkimer ARC, utilized grant funds and exceeded job placements by 11 percent securing employment for 72 individuals. They assisted individuals like Stephanie Fitch, who was dealing with a disability and raising two children. Fitch found herself underemployed and on Public Assistance. ACCES-VR referred her to Career Connections and she teamed up with Amanda Ortiz, an Employment Services supervisor, who worked diligently to get her a job as a bus aide. Fitch now helps transport special need kids within a local school district.

According to Fitch that's when things began to change for the positive. "It's amazing that one day you can be in the dumps to now being so happy," Fitch said. "I love my job, the kids, the driver I work with, and my boss is great. The work atmosphere is awesome. Without Amanda and my mother, I would not have this job. My paychecks allow me to pay my bills and to do things with my kids."

Fitch will continue to work with Ortiz as she is determined to earn a CDL license to become a district bus driver. "I am so proud of Stephanie. She wanted a better life for her kids. I am so happy to be a part of something which changed someone's life dramatically," Ortiz said.

## Partnering for People

The Goodwill-HARC Store & Donation Center, a 7,000 sq. ft. retail store located in Herkimer, NY, was deemed the fastest growing store in Goodwill's region with a 19percent growth rate over the prior year. The unique alliance between the Herkimer ARC and Goodwill Industries of Greater New York & Northern New Jersey, remains the only outside retail partnership that Goodwill maintains today.

The store offers both new and gently used merchandise for sale with proceeds funding programs for people with disabilities. As promised, the store continues to provide employment opportunities for both disabled and non-disabled workers, and it now stands as an employment destination goal for Amanda Jeffreys.

Jeffreys spent many years at a day program and working in a supervised vocational center. Day & Community Supports staff, including Jeffreys' Medicaid Services Coordinator Ramona Gassmann, and Herkimer Industries and Career Connections staff worked to identify individuals who, with the right guidance and support, could be independent and part of community employment.

Career Connections started employment assessments with Jeffreys and her performance has been outstanding. Her supervisors are gratified with the support she is given at each work site and she has come very far in both her home and work lives. They state because she has been given different opportunities, she now always smiles and she is very positive. Jeffreys has worked at the HARC Business Park in assembly, she has been part of a cleaning crew, and she is now working in sorting and hanging clothes at the Goodwill-HARC Store.

"Many people are helping me and I like all the help," said Jeffreys. "I always said I wanted a job and now I am working to get one. I love sorting and hanging clothes on hangers. I really hope I can get a job at this store."

*With support from Herkimer ARC staff, Amanda Jeffreys is working toward getting a community job working at the Goodwill-HARC Store & Donation Center.*



## Partnering with New York State

In 2013, Herkimer ARC Residential Services was awarded a \$120,074 grant by New York State's OPWDD (Office for People with Developmental Disabilities). This amount is the estimated total to adhere to new reforms to place individuals into the most integrated community settings. The funds will help provide residential services to three individuals in the supportive apartment program. The requirement was they had to come from a traditional supervised Herkimer ARC home in order to take part in this project. By moving individuals out of the supervised IRAs (Individualized Residential Alternatives), it allowed the agency to move three people into those vacancies, who were prioritized by OPWDD as requiring a supervised setting.

The grant is used toward increasing staffing as this was proposed to assist in providing more enhanced services to people who were just beginning to live in apartment-style community housing and toward administrative oversight and implementation of the project to assure compliance to OPWDD regulation and the reporting requirement of the grant. The funds also help cover other internal entities needed to support the individuals with services such as clinical, nursing, maintenance, among others.

While individuals moved into supportive apartments, Michael Bruce and Bruce Archer were moving into their own apartment in the community. Their desire to break away from a supportive setting was realized through person-centered planning coordinated by the Herkimer ARC's Compliance and Quality department. With Bruce moving in together with his good friend, Michael, he left a spot open in a supportive apartment. Both Mike and Bruce were not only assisted by Herkimer ARC staff with their move, they also received financial support from their church, the Mohawk Reformed Church and Pastor Brian Engel, and by the Self-Advocacy Network in Onondaga County.

"We really like being roommates and living in the community," said Bruce Archer. "I lived in residential supportive apartments for ten years before staff inspired me to live in the community. There are other friends who live in my building that I've known from the agency for years. We are like family. Both Mike and I are very happy we moved here," he added.



*Mike Bruce, left, became roommates with Bruce Archer, who moved out of a Herkimer ARC Supportive Apartment to live in the community. Mike says friends he has met through the agency over the years support one another in their apartment complex. They spend birthdays together, go out for dinner and coffee, and participate in other fun outings. Mike and Bruce still receive support from the agency once a week with Habilitation services. Staff helps them with bills, shopping, and medical support.*

## Partnering with Law Enforcement

*Herkimer ARC President/CEO Kevin Crosley, left, and Vice President of Day & Community Supports Susan Streeter, right, presented Herkimer/Mohawk Police Chief Joseph Malone with a certificate of thanks for his presentation on community safety.*



In December 2013, the Herkimer ARC invited Herkimer/Mohawk Police Chief Joseph Malone to address a group of over 150 individuals the agency supports due to several incidents which occurred over the year.

Topics covered included protecting oneself from community predators, cell phone safety, online and computer safety, and how to report people or a situation to local police.

Herkimer ARC Vice President of Day & Community Supports Susan Streeter, commented, "We put the training in place as we were hearing incidences from people we support in the community and we were concerned, for example, individuals were meeting people online with no knowledge of safety filters—sending or even meeting people and giving them large sums of money 'cause they needed it,' or lending their cell phones out. We are grateful to Chief Malone for helping us to further educate the individuals we support."



## Partnering with Women Organizations



Thanks in part to a 2012 grant from of The Women's Fund of Herkimer and Oneida Counties, Inc., women with disabilities in Herkimer County now have access to classroom instruction—tailored specifically to their needs and understanding, on how to recognize, avoid, and extract themselves from domestic violence situations. Statistically, women who have disabilities have a 40 percent greater risk of violence than women who are not disabled, and between 75 to 80 percent are not reported.

The grant money allowed the Herkimer ARC to purchase curriculum, which was named SPACE (Safety · Planning · Awareness · Choice · Empowerment) geared toward women facing domestic violence. Agency staff including Lisa Gifford, Autism Supports and Innovations director, Breelynd Eggleston, Individual and Family therapist, Liz McKeon, Senior Medicaid Service coordinator, Audrey Piccione and Missy Parese, both Day Habilitation managers—all whom helped to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of women with disabilities. Liz McKeon was the instructor for the first course in 2013.

*Herkimer ARC staff adapted a domestic violence program to support women with disabilities. Above, both Breelynd Eggleston, Individual and Family therapist, and Liz McKeon, senior Medicaid Service coordinator, teach staff the program so they can become instructors.*

## Partnering for People

Thanks to a partnership with both community donors and Herkimer ARC agency staff, donations to an Annual Life Is Beautiful Campaign were utilized to create a JUST RIGHT SNOEZELEN ROOM, designed to offer consumers with special needs and challenging conditions, the opportunity to exercise choice through action. The room allows individuals the agency supports to enjoy a wide range of sensory experiences—either passively or actively—that enhance therapy, learning, arousal, and relaxation. Consumers choose the experiences that give them the most pleasure. The goal is to enable participants to interact freely with the different components to create a positive environment, control the level of sensory stimuli, adapt responses to sensory stimulation, experience easier transition to task, and perform and behave in a more functional manner.

According to Yvonne Kovits, Herkimer ARC occupational therapist, "Our world is full of sensory stimuli. Our senses are important, they tell us about our surroundings and they influence our reactions—in time they shape our personality and 'in a sense' they are what we are. We therefore seek to control the things that stimulate our senses. Some individuals are not able to organize and respond appropriately to sensory stimuli and may lack the ability or freedom to make choices to balance their sensory lives. For these individuals the world may be a confusing place full of over or under-stimulation. The room gives individuals the freedom to choose and explore in a safe environment. This helps with communication, relationships, exploring, and play. To date, those who utilize the room seem to gain a wonderful sense of choice and freedom," Kovits said.

The JUST RIGHT SNOEZELEN ROOM consists of black lights with light sensitive carpeting, comfortable seating for sitting or lying upon, various fiber optics, a color wheel projector, a mirror ball, bubble tube, acrylic waterfall, a Milky Way carpet, and various tactile and visual objects, as well as music and aromatherapy.



*Kathleen Jackson, left, shows Occupational Therapist Yvonne Kovits the lighted acrylic waterfall.*



## Partnering to Lead Reform



*Herkimer ARC service recipients selected as representatives for CQL accreditation committees include: Billie Jo Dennis, Amanda Jeffreys, Bruce Archer, Ron Hill, Anthony Guerriera, Jacob Lockner, and Lynn Mooney.*

The Herkimer ARC continued to work toward The Council on Quality and Leadership CQL Accreditation in 2013. Assigned working committees comprised of staff, people supported, board members, and led by Compliance & Quality staff members and agency executive team members, worked together to assess services to insure support is person-centered. The goal is that each person can live his or her own life: to plan, to contribute, to participate, to choose, and to be respected and valued.

According to Lorene Bass, vice-president - Compliance & Quality, “Our groups were very productive in 2013. We reviewed the CQL’s Basic Assurances and Indicators to make sure that we promote excellence in person-centered services and supports that lead to an increased quality of life. The accreditation process centers around continuous improvement. We used the year to assess what we as an agency do well and to look for areas which provide opportunities for the agency and the people we support to grow.”

The ten CQL Basic Assurance factors, which are used for assessment and change include: Right Protection and Promotion; Dignity and Respect; Natural Support Networks; Protection from Abuse, Neglect, Mistreatment and Exploitation; Best Possible Health, Safe Environments; Staff Resources and Supports; Positive Services and Supports; Continuity and Personal Security; and Basic Assurances System.

The accreditation process also includes the use of Personal Outcome Measures (POMs) as a CQL tool for Person Center Planning. POM also helps the agency to explore and discover opportunities to help people move forward in their lives and to assess the supports needed to help them get there.



*Herkimer ARC Direct Support Professionals presented materials at All-Staff meetings to recruit DSPs to join the Advisory Group. Those presenting included, from left, Kendra Tillinghast, Jason Marlowe, and Rene Bullock.*

## Partnering with Direct Support Professionals

The Herkimer ARC is partnering with Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) with the creation of a Direct Support Professional Advisory Council, whose goals are to support DSP education (core competencies and code of ethics), to assist in planning DSP week 2014 in conjunction with the executive team, to help shape agency policies (CQL & core competencies), and to build membership. By supporting DSPs, the agency retains well-trained, experienced, and motivated staff—who stay long-term to sustain relationships with individuals and their families.

Direct support professionals are the “core” of Herkimer ARC’s system of supports for individuals with developmental disabilities. Their jobs require technical and values-based skills that make life-changing differences in the lives of the individuals they support. The Core Competencies adopted by the New York State Talent Development Consortium apply to all DSPs across the state. Coupled with the Code of Ethics for Direct Support Professionals, these values-based competencies and skills are the foundation of person-centered supports for New Yorkers with developmental disabilities.

The Advisory Council’s mission reads: “The role of the DSP Advisory Council is to exemplify positivity and encourage professionalism. Through education, advocacy and adherence to the NADSP Code of Ethics, DSPs help improve perception of the career field and ultimately promote professionalism in the workplace, community and residential settings.”

The group was created with the assistance of Shawn Schultz, VP - Residential Services and Karen Peterson, VP - Human Resources. The DSP Council currently consists of: Jason Marlowe, Josh Sweet, Audrie Rooke, Jessica Servidone, Kendra Tillinghast, and Rene Bullock. Shawn Schultz and Karen Peterson continue to serve as advisors to the group.

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