



INTO THE WORLD OF WORK

News for Families and Supporters

Charging Lives One Job At A Time

Number 46 **Our services have continued and we are going strong despite the pandemic!** Winter 2021

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on our programs and services and negotiating our way through this uncharted experience brings new challenges every day. However, since March, we've been focused on a singular goal: to maintain the continuum of services despite a decrease in income and increases in emotional support needs and safety protocol training.



Our community has lost at least 20% of jobs in leisure, hospitality, accommodation and food services – industries in which the majority of our clients work. As a result, the number of clients with jobs went from hundreds prior to the pandemic to just 73 overnight. This large and sudden reduction launched a cascade of crushing events... fewer working clients meant less agency income, which meant potential staffing decreases. New York State carried out a 20% hold-back on funding, leading to a huge loss of income that we count on, which meant that we would have to fundraise more than usual – at a time when potential supporters are hurting.



The population we serve has challenges managing stress and anxiety under normal circumstances. Their needs for emotional support increased exponentially as did their needs for remaining safe on the job and at home. Our staff worked wherever, whenever and however needed, which often meant outside of normal business hours and via phone, FaceTime, ZOOM and in-person with masks and social distancing.

Most schools are participating in hybrid learning. Therefore, since fewer students are receiving our services, there are fewer dollars coming into CAREERS from school contracts. The most important setback is that the students who need our programs the most are not getting them.



Things are getting better but far from 100%. Many of our clients are now back to work and in paid internships, but many are not. Fortunately, we never let any of our staff go and all of our staff are back to pre-pandemic hours.

We are safely conducting Workforce Readiness classes via ZOOM so clients can hit the ground running as businesses re-open. Thanks to the patience, flexibility and commitment of our dedicated Employment Specialists, our program participants are staying healthy on the job, and at home, and they are having their emotional support needs met as well.

Interested in our services? Contact **CAREERS Support Solutions**

400 Columbus Avenue, Suite 123 South, Valhalla, New York 10595 – residents of mid to lower Westchester County

102 Gleneida Avenue, Carmel New York 10512 – residents of upper Westchester, Putnam or Dutchess Counties

(914) 741-8500 or CAREERSforPeople@aol.com

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***CAREERS is a
private non-profit
organization that
finds productive
employment for
individuals with
disabilities.
We provide
on-the-job training
and ongoing
support services.***

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hello CAREERS Friends & Supporters,

I cannot think of any one word that adequately sums up everything our community has experienced since the pandemic started in March. The first three months were the most trying, and like everyone, we were anxious, sad, stressed, overwhelmed and confused. One day we were working with hundreds of clients with jobs and the next, many were out of work. Our team was in a strange world where we had to prepare and plan ahead for the sake of our clients and each other but the unknowns about the virus, along with rapidly changing incident rates and safety protocols, made this next to impossible.

Like everyone, we banded together. We listened to the experts and followed the science. We created and instituted recommended safety protocols in our offices. For clients suddenly let go from their jobs, we efficiently helped them manage the logistics of sudden unemployment and the intense emotional distress that went with it. For our clients still working in essential jobs, we advocated for their safety at work, and for all clients we created new materials in a variety of formats so they and their families had the information they needed to stay safe in the community and at home. Our staff did all of this while fearing for their own health and employment since they too were trying to understand and navigate the magnitude of COVID-19.

By summertime, hope crept in. The number of cases throughout the communities we work in started going down and the Payroll Protection Plan (PPP) was enacted, so we were able to breathe a bit. Because of the PPP, we did not have to lay off any staff and I am tremendously proud and grateful for this fact.

Today, we are optimistic about vaccines but are anticipating what cold weather may bring as numbers of positive cases have already increased. We continue to follow the science and vigilantly practice safety protocols.

For those of us who are not disabled, this health crisis may be the first time our fears about staying healthy, earning an income and being isolated from our communities have coincided with such severity. But people with intellectual, developmental and psychiatric disabilities battle these fears every day – without the added anxiety brought on from dealing with COVID-19. At this moment, while our program participants must learn new skills to either stay employed or find new jobs, they are still determined to succeed. They are shining examples of the diligence, positivity and perseverance required from us all during dark times, and I for one, am taking heart.

We wish you all a safe and healthy 2021.

Tina Cornish-Lauria
Executive Director

CAREERS 33RD ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Many thanks to the generous and loyal sponsors of our November 2020 event:

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Karen Brown



Thank You To Our Sponsors

Like so many of our fellow nonprofits, we opted to have our Annual Anniversary Celebration virtually this year in an effort to maintain our long-standing tradition of recognizing the hard work and perseverance of our clients, as well as our loyal supporters. In fact, given the terrible impact these extraordinary circumstances have had on our clients' employment and mental health, we felt it was more important than ever to honor their strength and resilience. To that end, on Tuesday, November 10th, we ran a virtual event filled with uplifting videos, inspirational speeches, a fun slideshow and live chat so our clients, employers, co-workers, sponsors and supporters alike -- could share some good will and positivity together.

A FEW CAREERS SUCCESS STORIES

CAREERS 2020 Employee of the Year – Cindi Palermo

We do our best to identify annual stand-outs, and in an unprecedented year, doing this was more difficult than in the past. During the pandemic, all of our clients have had to push beyond their comfort zones to stay employed. This year, we announced this wonderful honor to **Cindi Palermo** at our recent virtual Annual Anniversary Celebration on November 10th.

Cindi (pictured far right with her Employment Specialist Jennifer Retacco) was recognized for her excellent work ethic and job performance at Target in White Plains where she has worked for the past 17 years. Cindi has done an exceptional job of adjusting to new job tasks as a result of the pandemic. According to her managers and co-workers, Cindi is an outstanding employee who works hard, has a positive attitude, takes store policies seriously and greets every customer with her warm smile.



Cindi has always worked in the fitting room, and rumor has it that she is a strict enforcer of the rules that limit the number of garments allowed per customer. But during the pandemic, the fitting rooms were closed, and she was unable to perform her usual job. Despite this, Cindi remained agreeable and willing to do anything and everything her employer asked of her. She even rearranged her schedule so that she could help out in different departments as needed. Cindi learned to wear many hats during these stressful times, and we are very proud of her for all that she has achieved.



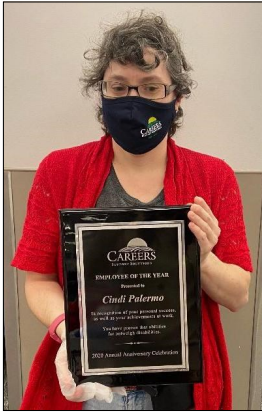
CAREERS client, **Michael Werner** (pictured right), has been working at ShopRite in Peekskill for 12 years. At the start of the pandemic, ShopRite, like most grocery stores, cut back on staff, and Michael was laid off from his position as a bagger. Shortly thereafter, ShopRite eliminated baggers all together as a safety precaution, so Michael's Employment Specialist began to focus on teaching him other skills that would help him get back to work. This included learning how to process returned grocery items by putting improperly shelved or randomly placed items back where they belong. These new skills made Michael more employable and, while Michael is happy to return to bagging (he likes helping customers with their groceries and the social interaction), he can now handle other tasks if/when needed.



CAREERS 2020 Most Improved Honoree - Cynthia Anderson

Cynthia has been with CAREERS for over 14 years and currently works at Stop and Shop, where she is celebrating her fourth anniversary. She works in the deli department where she has many different responsibilities. She received this honor because she has been more diligent about getting to work on time. Cynthia travels over an hour to work 4 days each week and, for a variety of reasons, arriving to work on time has been a challenge, but she has shown terrific growth in managing her situation. In addition, Cynthia carefully follows all rules and procedures and has been working throughout the entire pandemic. She does whatever is asked of her without issue, and she is a great team player.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2020 ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION HONOREES



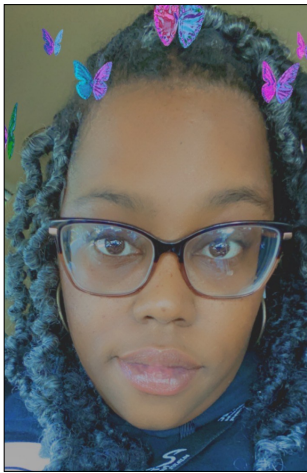
Employee of the Year
Cindi Palermo



Employers of the Year



Supervisor of the Year
Sean Higgins
Brewster Plastics



**Outstanding Program
Support Award**
Imani Brereton-Drakes



Most Improved
Cynthia Anderson



**Outstanding Parental
Support Award**
Tricia DeAngelis
with daughter Victoria



Internship Excellence Award
Jacob Diaz



Outstanding Advocate
Sharon Green



Retirement Honoree
Vincent Migliaccio

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2020 ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION HONOREES

Outstanding Co-workers

Gloria Howard
Green's Natural Foods
(not pictured)

Fabiana Ramos
Marshalls



Fabiana Ramos

Personal Achievement Awards

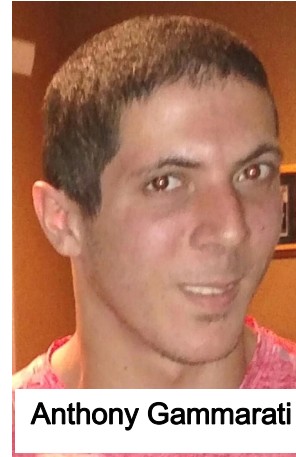
Giavanna Cilento
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Mariah Scarnati



Giavanna Cilento



Philip Ferris



Anthony Gammarati



Mariah Scarnati

Awards of Appreciation

CVS Health
District Leader, Ronald Rizzo

HOPE for Youth Foundation
President, Jim Witt

PCSB Community Foundation
President, Joe Roberto

People's United Community Foundation
Executive Director, Karen Galbo

Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley
CEO, Sally Cross & VP Putnam, Nancy Brownell



Sally Cross &
Nancy Brownell



HOPE for Youth
Jim Witt



Joe Roberto



Ron Rizzo



Karen Galbo



AMBITION IN MOTION (AIM) PROGRAM - STILL GOING STRONG!

Despite the pandemic, our AIM clients have been able to safely interact with each other and engage with their communities by participating in a variety of lively and fun outdoor activities, as well as volunteering throughout the community.

AIM is a "day habilitation without walls" program designed for people with intellectual, developmental and emotional disabilities who are not quite ready for supported work. We use a ***person-centered*** approach in order to tailor activities to each client's needs, interests and abilities. Through social interaction and community involvement, participants learn crucial independent living and employment skills. They experience a wide array of activities such as volunteering at food banks, community gardens and businesses, and going on various outings that they plan.

The program is free and transportation is available. We offer both men's and women's groups, and occasionally combine both for fun outings. Email careersforpeople@aol.com for more information.



Volunteering at Kent Recycling Center



Gardening at Tilly Foster Farm



Hiking on the Appalachian Trail

Christmas fun at the mall



Halloween outing

SPECIAL TRIBUTE DONATIONS

Donations were made in honor of the following individuals:

Lauren Enea and CAREERS Annual Anniversary Celebration

Samuel Schwartz

All CAREERS Staff

Mr. and Mrs. Pasquale Scalfaro

The Forbes Family

Judith McDowall

Howard Forbes's Birthday

The Selma Lee and Daniel Weiss Charitable Fund

Daniel and Judith Campisi Charitable Fund

Karen Brown

Alex Hart and Art Amler

Rodd Berro

Art Amler

Philip and Vicki Webber

In Memory of Dr. David Amler

Peggy Amler

Howard Forbes

Miriam Klein

It's simple to make a donation and designate it as a gift for a memorial, anniversary, birthday, or any other occasion. Simply mail in a donation or go to our website and make a secure donation using PayPal.

Thank You!

MANY THANKS TO OUR 2020 CORPORATE & FOUNDATION SUPPORTERS



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Bank



Our corporate and foundation supporters help us provide job training and placement services to individuals with disabilities who want to work, always at no cost to them, their families or employers.

Thank you
FOR YOUR SUPPORT

When you donate to CAREERS, you help make the difference for people with disabilities.

We don't just work to achieve our mission of placing people in jobs and providing the support they need to keep them. We also empower individuals and effect change. With your help, CAREERS makes the world a better place. When you make a donation, your gift creates a ripple effect that goes beyond your original intent. It provides the resources needed to help our clients, while helping society as a whole.

All donations to CAREERS are tax-deductible by law. Please make checks out to CAREERS Support Solutions and mail to 400 Columbus Avenue, Suite 123 South, Valhalla, NY 10595.



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