December 2023

The Water Cooler

Citizens Options Unlimited

Citizens Options Unlimited Monthly Newsletter

A Communication from Human Resources

Message from the CEO	Executive Thank You	NCE Conference & Awards Photos
The DSP Connection NADSP E-Badge Academy	NADSP E-Badge Academy Event	Health & Wellness
December Training Calendar	Career Ladder with TAT	Welcome New Team Members
What's Happening @ Shoreham	What's Happening @ Wantagh Respite	Work Anniversary's
Employee Assistance Program	Silver Lion Loan Forgiveness	Empower Financial Retirement
Empower Financial Mobile	Empire BCBS Announcement	Wheatley Farms Catering & Greenhouse
Wheatley Farms Gift Shop	One Stop Gift Shop	Upcoming Events & Celebration Calendar

2023 National Conference of Executives (NCE) Award Recipients

Congratulations to all of the 2023 National Conference of Executives (NCE) Award Recipients!

We'd like to give special recognition to our Chapter leaders who received NCE awards at The Arc of the United States National Convention in New Orleans in November.

Dr. Hassan M. Abdulhaqq, Vice President of Talent Acquisition, Development and Engagement at AHRC Nassau, received the 2023 Rising Star Award.

Stanfort Perry, CEO of AHRC Nassau, received the 2023 Diversity and Cultural Competency Award.

Article and photos courtesy of Community Resources, AHRC LinkedIn

The Arc NATIONAL CONVENTION NEW ORLEANS 2023

Left Picture: Stanfort Perry and Dr. Hassan Abdulhaqq Right Picture: from left to right: Stanfort Perry, Saundra Gumerove, Esq., Seon Walker-Bailey, Barry Donowitz, Nicole Zerillo, Sarah Gonzalez Noveiri, Ph.D., Dr. Hassan M. Abdulhaqq

Message from the CEO

Dear Colleagues,

During this wonderful season of giving and gratitude, I would like to wish you and your families the best that the season has to offer. I also want to thank you for a wonderful 2023. As we embark on yet another year, I thank each of you for your considerable support and dedication to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. On behalf of our Boards of Directors, people supported and their families, thank you for making a difference.

Special thanks go to staff from the Brookville Center for Children's Services (BCCS) who came together to bring the joy of Thanksgiving to Long Islanders experiencing food insecurity. Nearly 1,500 pounds of food were donated to community-based organizations through the collective efforts of our school community. A few weeks earlier, thousands of dollars were raised for the AHRC Foundation Walk. The AHRC Walk is one way to benefit the Foundation. As you think about your holiday giving, I also encourage you to become an AHRC Foundation Angel.

Such meaningful contributions underscore our commitment to each other as well as our greater community. By doing so, we are upholding our values and creating new connections to advance our shared missions.

Special thanks to the staff at Big Tree Gift Shop, another endeavor of the Wheatley Farms line of services and products. Your purchase at Wheatley Farms Big Tree Gift Shop helps to ensure meaningful employment of people with disabilities. Visit the Gift Shop Tuesday-Saturday from 11 am-6 pm on the Brookville campus to purchase holiday gift items and so much more. The Christmas Tree Lighting will take place on December 6th at Big Tree from 5-7 pm. Hot cocoa will be served. Please arrive early for the lighting of the Christmas Tree. (check the date and time and correct as necessary)

Once the holidays are over, we will all be very busy again advocating for improved wages and equity for our Direct Support and other essential employees. Please show your support and take part in our one-click, advocacy campaign (See Nicole for proper link) calling for legislators to allocate funding for the sustainability of our supports and services.

Thank you for being a part of our community – and helping build a more equitable future for all.

As always, your feedback and comments are welcome.

Happy Holidays,

Best Regards

Stanfort

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Executive Thank You

Thanks were expressed to:

- Dr. Hassan Abdulhaqq and Sarah Gonzalez-Noveiri for their presentations at The Arc NCE Convention in New Orleans.

- Lisa Larice-Nielsen for the presentation of the enhanced newsletters.

- The teams who planned and produced a successful, engaging Grateful Giving Luncheon in Brookville, Plainview, Freeport, and Shoreham.

- Patricia Gill-Fisher, for her consistent support and hard work on getting the Consumer Accounts activated.

- Nicci Kern & MJ Zayas on their consistent hard work in successfully attaining a grant for Citizens to improve security at Shoreham.

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2023 National Conference of Executives (NCE) Award Photos

The Arc
NATIONAL CONVENTION
NEW ORLEANS 2023

#TheArcConvention:
Sarah Gonzalez Noveiri Ph.D., DEI Officer, and
Dr. Hassan M. Abdulhaqq, VP of Talent Acquisition, Development and Engagement, presented at The Arc Convention.

Sarah's session shared insight on the topic, "From Tokenism to Meaningful Inclusion: Doing DEI Honestly and Ethically," while Hassan's session explored "Overcoming Barriers to Cultural Competency." #nonprofitstrong

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The DSP Connection

The everything DSP connection with DSP only programs, advice and special events

NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR DIRECT SUPORT PROFESSIONALS

Would you like to take your career further? The NADSP E-Badge Academy offers DSPs the opportunity to earn this nationally recognized credential through the completion of 3 rigorous levels of certification.

As a participant in this special program, you are eligible for a total of $2,250 in bonus payments offered in three installments as you progress:

DSP LEVEL 1 CERTIFICATION - $500
DSP LEVEL 2 CERTIFICATION - $750
DSP LEVEL 3 CERTIFICATION - $1,000

You will complete all coursework online through the E-Badge Academy during your regularly scheduled work hours for up to 2 ½ hours per week

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Vanessa Wright
Learning and Professional Development Specialist
516-293-1111 Ext. 5366
VWright@ahrc.org

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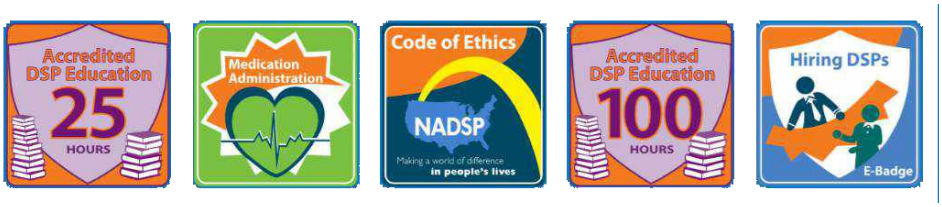
The DSP Connection

There are weekly NADSP E-Badge events held on Wednesdays in various locations please look for email and text blasts announcing the locations and times.

The NADSP E-Badge Academy



Come Get the Scoop!

Vanessa Wright held a very successful E-Badge event at Tobie Lane Day Hab. The theme of the event was Success Never Tasted This Sweet with ice cream and ice pops served during the event. Vanessa will hold these events on Wednesdays with different themes. Look for email & text blasts with announcements.

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Health & Wellness

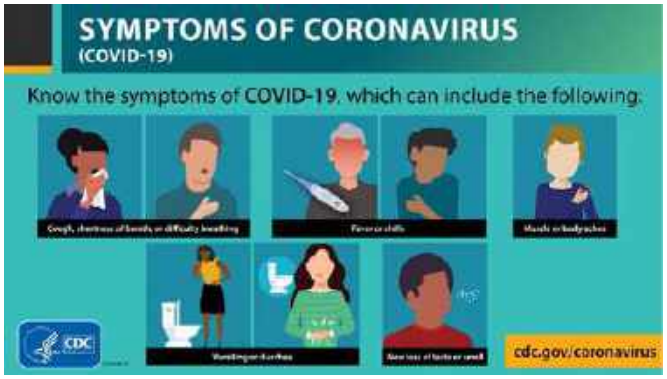
Staying Healthy

Earn while you stay fit with...

IncentFit

COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS

If you are feeling any of these symptom please stay home and call the Covid Hotline.



COVID-19 Hotline: 516-686-4486

Get Four Free At-Home COVID-19 Tests this Fall on COVIDTests.gov

Every U.S. household may place an order to receive four free COVID-19 rapid tests delivered directly to your home.

Order Free At-Home Tests

Nikki's Namaste

by Nikki Katz,
Yoga Instructor

Butterfly (Baddha konasana):

Opens the groin and hips; stretches the inner thighs. Forward folding stretches the back

- ◊ Sitting tall on your mat, bring the soles of your feet together.
- ◊ Interlace your fingers and place them around the toes.
- ◊ Sit tall, rolling the shoulders back, and gaze past the end of the nose.
- ◊ Lean forward for a deeper stretch, stopping when you start to "feel" the stretch.
- ◊ With every inhale, feel your spine growing longer (imagine the crown of your head reaching out in front of you to the wall); with every exhale, allow the body to sink lower (the chest is getting closer to the floor).

TIP: Use blocks under your knees if your hips are particularly tight.

Learning & Professional Development

December's Training Schedules

AMAP:

_ 12/5 – 12/7 8a-3:30p
_ 12/12-12/14 same time as above
_ 12/19 – 12/21 same time as above

CPR:

_ 12/5 4p -7p Existing Staff (ES)
_ 12/7 8:30a-1p New Hires (NH)
_ 12/14 9a-11a –NH
_ 12/15 10a-1p - ES
_ 12/21 9a-11a –NH
_ 12/28 9a-11a –NH

SCIP Full

_ 12/14 -12/15 10a-5p
_ 12/18-12/19 9a-4p

SCIP Recert

_ 12/6 3p-10p
_ 12/18 3p-10p

Defensive Driving

_ 12/6 - 9a-4p
_ 12/13 - 9a-4p

Diabetes Training

_ 12/28 - 8:30a-12:30a

Tube Feeding Training

_ 12/27 - 8:30a-12:30a

Colostomy Training

_ 12/29 – 8:30a-11:30a

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Career Ladder with TAT

Internal Job Openings

House Manager
Job Req # 2023-6690
Position Type: Full-Time
Schedule: Tuesday – Friday Flex, Saturday 9am-5pm
Location: Glen Cove, Circle Drive
Pay Rate: $58,500 per year

Job Profile:
Primary duties and responsibilities include but not limited to: Responsible for the direct management of a residence in the Community Living Services Program Ongoing supervision of Assistant Manager and Direct Support Professionals to ensure that the people we support have the opportunity to a safe and quality life and that the site is efficiently running...
Click for more information & to Apply

DSP 1:1 Day Hab
Job Req # 2023-6670
Position Type: Full-Time
Schedule: Monday-Friday 7:30am-3:30pm
Location: Westbury
Pay Rate: $16-$17 per hour

Job Profile:
Primary duties and responsibilities include but not limited to: Management of one volunteer in the Day Program by ensuring the implementation and recording of the progress of habilitative and clinical services plans. Functions as member of activity room staff, by performing routine direct care responsibilities regarding the activity room and other volunteers, as directed by Site Manager. In the event of the volunteer's absence, reassignment will be determined by the supervisor.
Click for more information & to Apply

Asst. House Manager - Citizens
Job Req # 2023-6672
Position Type: Full-Time
Schedule: Sun. through Thurs. 3:00 pm-11:00 pm
Hourly Rate: $18—$19

Job Profile:
Supervises and works directly with direct support professionals in the delivery of care to the residents by goal implementation and monitoring. Provides feedback to staff in order to have a proper quality of care for residents. Assists House Manager in providing care for residents by assuring clothing needs are met, personal and recreational supplies are maintained, and personal safety is assured by close supervision of residents, in order to maintain a proper quality of life for residents.
Click for more information & to Apply

Teacher Aide
Job Req #2023-6451
Schedule: Monday-Friday 8:00am-3:30pm
Program: BCCS
Location: Woodbury
Pay Rate: $17.50 per hour

Job Profile:

Assist the assigned teacher in all areas of the daily classroom routine. Assist the children as requested by the teacher; maintain the health and safety of the classroom environment by performing assigned tasks. You may be required to attend evening meetings. Prepare classroom materials as requested by the teacher. Classroom assignment is subject to change based on program needs.
Click for more information & to Apply

School Registered Nurse
Job Req #2023-6374
Schedule: Monday-Friday 8:30am-4:00pm
Program: BCCS
Location: Brookville
Pay Rate: $70,000—$85,000 per year

Job Profile:
Fulfill all school nurse functions as needed in a special education environment appropriately and professionally

Click for more information & to Apply

Patient Rep-Advtg
Job Req # 2022-4286
Position Type: Full-Time
Schedule: Flex up to 35hr, may include Sat & Evenings
Pay Rate: $22—$24 per hour

Job Profile:
The Patient Representative is responsible for intakes of new patients, scheduling of patient appointments, updating Health Insurance plans and making "cases" as needed, checking Dental managed care insurance to make sure Advantage Care is the dental home
Click for more information & to Apply

Click on any of the logos above to go to their Career' s site.

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Welcome New Team Members

Pictures from our weekly New Hire Orientation

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What's Happening @ Shoreham

Grateful Gatherings at Shoreham

Grateful Gatherings

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What's Happening @ Wantagh Respite

We're back at respite for Wantagh Wednesdays and we're making pancakes! Everyone got to choose their own toppings, from blueberries to chocolate chips, to sprinkles and whipped cream...

Michelle and the Wantagh respite crew created beautiful table centerpieces and wrote on the back who and what they're thankful for.

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Citizen's Work Anniversaries

Happy Anniversary to our dedicated Citizen's Employees

Danielle Siebert

Happy 6th Anniversay!!!

Rachelle Demosthene

Happy 13th Anniversay!!!

Justin Moskowitz

Happy 14th Anniversay!!!

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Employee Assistance Program

LIFE HAPPENS.
WE UNDERSTAND.
YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

Even when we have our day planned out, life can sometimes take us by surprise. No matter what, it's always good to know you have support to help you move forward.

YOUR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

24/7/365 access to EAP counseling services and online resources for you and your immediate family members.

- Mental health and wellbeing
- Child care, elder care, and family support
- Work and career growth
- Grief and addiction
- Legal and financial needs
- Pre-qualified referrals to providers, specialists, and resources

NATIONAL EAP

U: AHRC
PW: AHRC

www.nationaleap.com

Need Help?
TOLL-FREE: 1-800-624-2593
Just call or log on to get started

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Silver Lion—Loan Forgiveness

SILVER LION
STUDENT LOAN ADVISORS

Lower your Loan Payments & Qualify for Loan Forgiveness!

IMPORTANT UPDATE:

Interest Restart: September 1st

Payment Restart: October, 2023

ARE YOU READY?

About Us.

Silver Lion Student Loan Advisors helps individuals with Federal Student Loan Debt. We offer **Free** Loan Reviews and Analysis to determine if borrowers *and* their loans are eligible for an Income Driven Repayment Programs and/or Loan Forgiveness. Silver Lion also offers **For-Fee** services to complete and process Loan Consolidation, IDR Enrollment, Loan Forgiveness, PSLF, Default & Garnishment Relief, and more.

What We Do.

- Conduct Free loan reviews for Federal Student Loans,
- Determine the best program that suits borrowers' goals,
- Confirm eligibility,
- Provide Program payment projection and loan forgiveness opportunities,
- Not in Good Standing? We'll help get loans there,
- Handle all of the enrollment and administration, and
- Help to re-certify annually.

How We Can Help

Our Advisors are available to answer questions, review loans and, most importantly, help borrowers take advantage of historic & new Federal Student loan programs.

Call Us: 855.254.1886

Scan Code to Watch Explainer Video

STUDENT LOAN RELIEF WEBINARS

SCAN TO REGISTER

SCHEDULE A FREE ONE-ON-ONE LOAN REVIEW

SCAN TO SIGN-UP

SILVER LION
STUDENT LOAN ADVISORS

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EMPOWER
What's Next

Make an impact on your savings

Here are some simple things you can do to help you start saving for your future again

It's important to have control over creating the future you imagine. And saving for retirement is one way to improve your financial wellness. Even when times are tough, there are things you can do that can make a big difference in your ability to keep saving.

- Inquire about lower interest rates on credit cards.
- Reevaluate your subscriptions (e.g., streaming services).
- Reduce your insurance premiums (e.g., car and home).
- Trim your entertainment expenses.
- Find ways to lower utility bills.
- Prepare and eat meals at home.

The Empower Dashboard™ can help you stay financially fit so you can save more

- Track your spending habits.
- Create a budget.
- Link accounts to see your full financial picture.
- Easily manage your finances.

FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY.

› Log in and use the online resources to see the impact small changes can have on your savings
www.empowermyretirement.com

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EMPOWER

FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

Your plan is accessible when you're on the go

The Empower mobile experience puts your retirement plan at your fingertips. Use it to access and manage your 403(b) plan account when you're on the go — right from your mobile device.

Prefer to begin your journey now online?

- Log on to **empowermyretirement.com**
- Select *Register*.
- Choose the *I do not have a PIN* tab.
- Follow the prompts to create your username and password.

If we don't have your email or phone number on file from your employer, or if you have another account with Empower (with a former employer, for example), you will need to call to access your new plan account.*

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Empire BlueCross BlueShield
An Anthem Company

IMPORTANT HEALTH INSURANCE NEWS

We are very excited to share the news that on January 1, 2024, the Empire BlueCross BlueShield (Empire) name will become Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield (Anthem).

This will not impact your coverage, access to care, or level of support.

You'll still be able to:

- **Use the wide range of doctors and hospitals that you do today.**
- **Access your same benefits.**
- **Share or download your ID card through empireblue.com <or the Sydney Health app>**

Frequently asked questions (FAQ)

Want to know more about Anthem? From Anthem's backstory, to what the new name means for Empire members, explore some of our frequently asked questions.

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Wheatley Farms™
Catering & Greenhouse

Visit Us Online for Catering & Greenhouse Needs

Welcome! Wheatley Farms has been serving Nassau County for over 20 years. We are known for a diverse American & International style menu created with old-world recipes and locally sourced plants, flowers, and vegetables grown at The Wheatley Farms Greenhouse. We are offering an extensive selection of plants and hanging baskets.

We offer free, same-day delivery Monday through Friday to our Brookville, Plainview, and Freeport offices, Advantage Care, and the BCCS schools!

Place your BREAKFAST order by 1:00 pm for next-day delivery beginning at 9:00 am.
Place your LUNCH order by 10:30 am for 1 pm delivery.
Place your Take Home DINNER order by 10:30 am for 4:00 pm delivery!

SPECIAL REQUESTS
We accept special orders! If you have a special request or need service outside of our listed hours, please email us at catering@wheatleyfarmsli.com for any questions about your order. Thank you!.

Wheatley Farms™
Catering & Greenhouse

Click Our Logo to visit us online and to place your orders.

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Visit Us Online to Purchase With Purpose

Our Mission

Wheatley Farms makes giving and receiving gifts even more meaningful!

From the people who buy our products to the people who produce them, everyone at Wheatley Farms is part of something truly special.

For the last two decades, Wheatley Farms has promoted a more inclusive community with a deep commitment to this social responsibility.

Our mission is simple—to create employment opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in their communities.

Holiday Plants

Giftshop

Christmas Wreaths

Click any of the images to visit us online
to make a purchase that you can feel good about.

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ONE STOP Gift Shop

BUILDING A STRONGER COMMUNITY THROUGH GIVING

Visit our online store at:

https://one-stop-gift-shop.square.site/s/shop

The Story Behind Our Shop

The **One Stop Gift Shop** values giving as a way to spread kindness worldwide. That starts with how we're run. The One Stop Gift Shop offers people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities supports by AHRC Day Services an opportunity to participate fully in the running of the gift shop. People supported are creating and crafting handmade items, answering the phone, taking online orders, packaging and delivering merchandise, and keeping inventory tracking.

At Checkout Use Code "ahrcn"

15% off

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Upcoming Events & Celebrations

DECEMBER

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