



Members of Support Services at the Hawaiian Shirt Giveaway Baltimore Orioles Game.

Fall Connections

Welcome to the Fall 2026 edition of Connections!

In this issue, we're highlighting the people, activities, and accomplishments that made this summer memorable across Community Living. You'll find updates from Residential Services, Support Services, Quality Assurance, and Meaningful Day, along with a message from our CEO, Michael Planz.

Inside, we celebrate new experiences and seasonal outings, welcome new people and staff members, and share the latest from our self-advocacy community. You'll also find an invitation to participate in our 2026 Stakeholder Survey and help shape the future of our services and supports.

We hope you enjoy catching up on what the people we support and our dedicated staff have been doing. As fall begins, we look forward to the opportunities, events, and experiences the new season will bring!



A Message from our CEO

I have always felt like Community Living does a great job! We support people to participate in so many fun and interesting activities; we strive to ensure people are as healthy as possible, and work to build relationships wherever we can. But, you know what they say, you can't rest on your laurels. With that sentiment in mind, CLI has decided to pursue the next level of accreditation with The Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL). This next level, Person Centered Excellence, strives to ensure providers are keeping the person supported at the forefront of all decisions and practices. While we already strive for this, being intentional about it helps us discover new ways to ensure people have the best quality of life and enjoy the same basic human rights as everyone else.

A good example is voting. As you know, an election is coming up. While many of us may not think much about the voting process, people with disabilities may be unsure of their rights and responsibilities. To help address this, we recently supported 15 people in attending a voter information session conducted by Voices of Ability, Frederick County's local self-advocacy group, and the Frederick County Board of Elections.



More on the
next page!



A Message from our CEO

Our CQL on-site visits will take place the week of November 9th- 13th. During this time, reviewers will meet with various groups, including management, DSPs, people supported, and families. On November 12th, we will hold a stakeholder meeting where people with an interest in CLI will come together to review what we do well, suggest areas for improvement, and help us develop a plan for the future. I have already sent a “save the date” e-mail to many people and am pleased to share that seven families have expressed interest in participating. If you would like to be part of this important day, please call me at the CLI office or email me at info@CLIFrederick.org.

Although it's easy to get caught up in the day-to-day operations of an organization, our work should always reflect the guiding principle of self-advocates everywhere: “Nothing About Us Without Us.”

- Michael, CEO



Gerald and Michael at Karaoke



Residential Services



Residential staff, with support from QA, worked diligently to ensure that the people we support had opportunities to enjoy a wide variety of summer events. Activities included Orioles, Nationals, and Frederick Keys baseball games, along with exciting new experiences such as the Wizard of Oz drone show and the Water Circus. Other favorites included the Commanders' training camp, Toby's Dinner Theatre, movies at Warehouse Cinemas, karaoke nights, and cooking classes. Thanks to the dedication of our staff, the people we support enjoyed a memorable and engaging summer filled with fun and new experiences!

With fall and winter just around the corner, we are also excited for football season! Whether cheering from the stands or watching from the couch, the season is officially underway.

The Residential Department is pleased to welcome Brady! After living at home with his parents, Brady has chosen to make one of our residential homes his new home. We are excited to welcome him to the CLI residential community.

CLI currently has openings in some of our residential homes. To learn more, please contact the Residential Director at info@CLIFrederick.org

- Debra,

Director of Residential Services



Aaron, Alex, and Connor at Toby's to see Donna Summers



Gerald, David, and Bobby at the Wizard of Oz Drone Show



Bill and Jessica at Special Olympics Summer Games



Support Services

This has been a busy, hot, and rainy summer! Although the weather forced us to cancel a few outdoor activities, we adapted and found plenty of indoor adventures to enjoy instead.

Cooking and canning were among the most popular activities this summer. Several people have taken on roles in shopping, preparing ingredients, cooking, serving, and cleaning up as they create delicious meals for everyone to enjoy. These experiences have helped participants develop new skills while fostering a wonderful sense of teamwork and accomplishment.

September 1st marked the first anniversary of Iman's passing. Many gathered to remember him and share a meal featuring several kinds of pasta—one of his favorite foods. Delores also brought a cake in his memory. Iman was further honored by having his name included on the Frederick Keys' Cancer Awareness jersey, which recognized individuals who lost their lives to cancer.

We also had a wonderful group of kayakers, golfers, flag football players, and tennis players this season. Staying active is important to many of the people we support, and building stamina helps them succeed at work and embrace new adventures. The sky is the limit!

Finally, please join us for an Inspiration Walk supporting Special Olympics Frederick County on October 11 at 9:00 a.m. at the Walkersville High School track. We hope to see you there!

- **Carlota,**
Director of Support Services



Nick at Kayaking Qualifier



Shauna and Crystal cutting apples



Kathy, Carlota, Delores, and Dylan wearing the Keys Cancer Appreciation Jersey

FREDERICK COUNTY 1K/5K INSPIRATION

WALK

Special Olympics
Maryland

2026 |
Walk together.
Inspire inclusion.



SUNDAY
OCTOBER 11, 2026

START TIME
9:00 AM

WALKERSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL
Stadium Track | 81 W. Frederick St.
Walkersville, MD 21793

REGISTER TO WALK | \$40

Register by September 25 to receive a commemorative T-shirt.

Same-day registration is available (T-shirt not included). Packet and T-shirt pickup begins at 7:30 AM; please arrive 30-45 minutes before the walk.

All ages welcome | Rain or shine
Please leave pets at home



**SCAN TO REGISTER
OR DONATE**

Your participation supports Special Olympics Maryland - Frederick County.
support.somd.org/event/2026-frederick-inspiration-walk/e810263

BE A CHAMPION FOR INCLUSION



Quality Assurance

Our self-advocacy community has experienced an exciting season of growth and connection. The group has welcomed new members, held its largest internal meeting to date, and participated in events including DDA's Tech First Summit, The Arc Maryland's Self-Advocate Summit, and several Voices of Ability (VOA) meetings.

Self-advocates have also continued sharing their experiences with the wider community. Katie and Crystal helped train Frederick Police Department cadets during a recent training session. At the Tech First Summit, Starr served as a panelist and spoke about her experience using an assistive reading pen. While attending the summit, she also learned from her peers about other forms of assistive technology and explored some of the new tools becoming available.

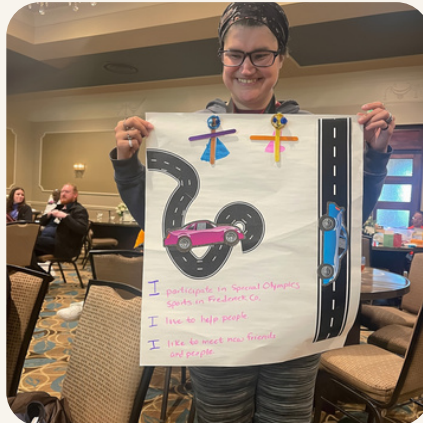
With election season approaching, Voices of Ability has been learning more about voting rights and accessible voting. Recent meetings have featured presentations from the Frederick County Board of Elections and Disability Rights Maryland, giving members valuable information about participating in the voting process.

It has truly been a season of growth, learning, connection, and empowerment for our self-advocates!

- Jena,
**Community Outreach & Quality
Assurance Coordinator**



Starr leading the VOA July meeting



Anaelle at the Self-Advocacy Summit



Katie, Crystal, and Michael at the training facility





2026 Stakeholder Survey



HELP US IMPROVE!

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK



We want to hear from you!

Please take a few minutes to complete our 2026 Stakeholder Survey. Your feedback is incredibly valuable and will help us continue improving the services and supports we provide.

The survey is open to anyone who interacts with CLI or the people we support, including community partners, service providers, employers, volunteers, advocates, and others familiar with our services.

Click [here](#) to take the survey or scan the QR code.

Thank you!





Meaningful Day Program

It's been a wonderful summer! In addition to our year-round activities, the people we support enjoyed some special seasonal experiences, such as attending Frederick Keys and Baltimore Orioles baseball games, hitting balls at TopGolf, and visiting the Washington Commanders' training camp.

In August, we welcomed both Rizwaan and Jeanne into our Meaningful Day services, and at the start of September, we were excited to welcome two new case managers: Ashleigh Harris and Beth Shields-McGuinness. Ashleigh has been a DSP with Community Living since January 2017 and is already well-acquainted with everyone in our program. Beth is transitioning from our Health Services department, where she served as a delegating nurse since 2024, so she is already familiar with most people on her caseload. Both are fantastic additions to our team in their new roles as case managers.

When you visit our Hayward Road site, you'll likely notice a new desk to the right of the front door, where you'll be greeted by the familiar and friendly face of Valerie Mills. While Valerie is keeping a small caseload and continues to manage transportation for our department, she will now also be providing support to our DSPs.



Jeanne outside, near the Gazebo



Aaron, Conner, Lucas, Greg, Michael, and Steven at an Orioles Game



Rizwaan





Meaningful Day Program

Congratulations to Katie on starting her new job at Beans & Dreams in Middletown! Katie is currently receiving employment support through DORS and will transition to ongoing employment support funded by DDA. She is doing a fantastic job, and we are excited to celebrate this accomplishment with her!

Direct Support Professional Recognition Week (September 13-19) is a great time to say THANK YOU and honor the dedication, compassion, and hard work of all of our DSPs, who enrich the lives of those we support in discovering and living their best lives!

- Tom B.,
Director of Day Services



Beth and Ashley, our two new case managers



Valerie at her desk, in her new position

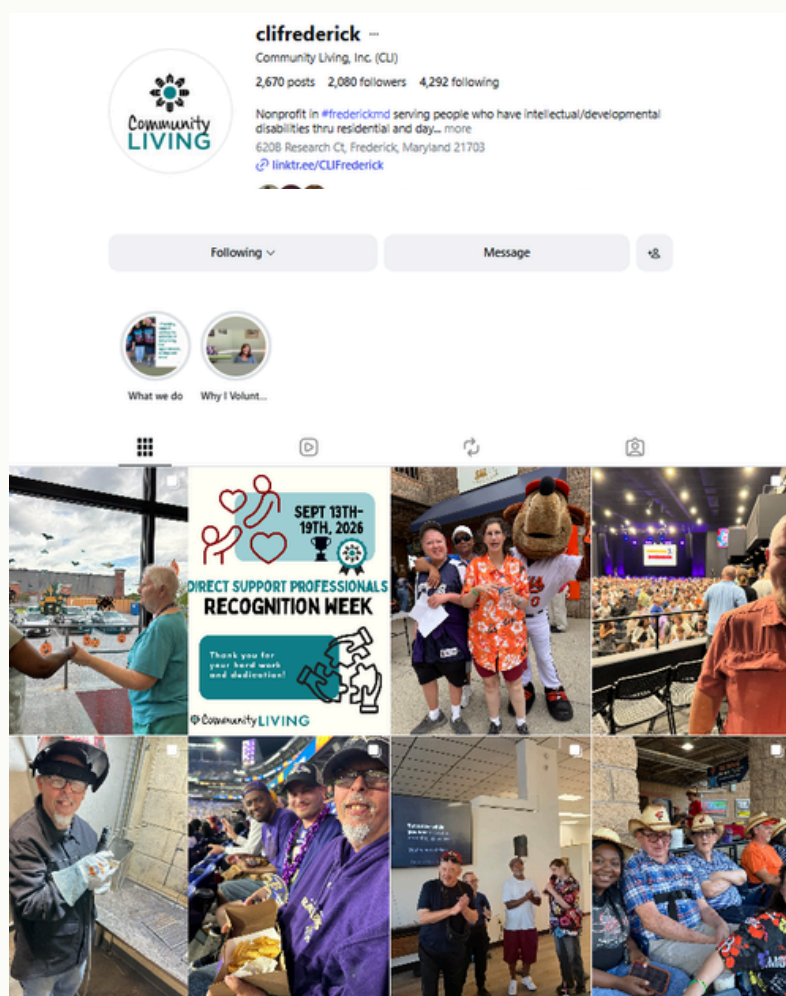




Connect with us!



Community Living, Inc. (CLI) is a nonprofit that provides supports and services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. To learn more about CLI and what we do, visit <https://communitylivinginc.org>



Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok for updates, events, and stories from across CLI.



@CLIFrederick



MORE OUTINGS AND ACTIVITIES



Starr and Nikki dancing at karaoke



April and Greg practicing their knife skills at a cooking class



Colleen, David, and Erin at a Frederick Keys Game



Lukas, David, and Greg at a Phantoms Hockey Game



Chris, Delores, and Colleen with Keyote



PJ Miller at his welding class at HCC



Cindy and Mariam at Karaoke



Jessica, Bill, Amanda, and April at a Commanders vs Ravens game