



WHAT'S INSIDE

Spring 2021 Newsletter

FROM THE CEO

WHO WE ARE

WHAT'S NEW

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

STAY CONNECTED

A LETTER FROM THE CEO

Michael Planz



There are a lot of adjectives to describe the past year but regardless of which words you use, organizations like Community Living have had to muddle through the best we can. After an outbreak at one house in March of 2020, we went almost 9 months before there were any more positive cases of Covid-19 among people we support or our staff. Fortunately, that outbreak is also behind us and I am happy to say that most of the people we support and a majority of our staff have had the opportunity to be vaccinated.

Throughout it all, our Direct Support Professionals and front-line supervisors have been phenomenal. People donned their PPE and worked in homes where residents had tested positive, and supervisors stepped in and worked hundreds of hours in situations where no staff were available. As you are aware, the services we provide do not allow for shifts to go unfilled. So when someone was out, someone else had to step in. Beyond residential we support dozens of people in support services and day services. For many of these people no in-person services were available. Our leadership team got creative though and used virtual supports to keep people engaged who would not have had otherwise had opportunities to interact with their peers. And, throughout it all, we continued to support people in jobs where they were considered essential employees.

While many of you reading this were probably impacted by Covid 19 in some way, it directly impacted Community Living and the people we support every day. The outpouring of support from our community has been very touching from monetary donations to mask making and contributions of supplies. As I have said before, our supporters are critical to our success.

As we move forward, I hope you all stay well and that you can soon return to pre-pandemic life. Please keep us in mind, as we will be thinking of you.

WHO WE ARE



Community Living, Inc. (CLI) is a nonprofit that supports people who have Down syndrome, autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities.

We were founded in 1979 as a residential-only organization, and have expanded since then to offer services across the span of adult life.



Our residential department consists of 25 group homes here in Frederick. They're fully staffed and operated in a way that promotes the highest level of independence possible.

Our day programs offer supports for everything from employment (finding jobs for the people we support and coaching once the jobs are secured) to tasks of daily living, like going to the doctor or grocery shopping. Our retirement program gives the people we support the chance to have fun and participate in enriching activities after they've reached retirement age.



Our goal is to make sure that the people we support have the means and opportunity to live full, independent lives. Many organizations serve children with I/DD, but not many serve only adults.

WHAT'S NEW



The past year has been an immense challenge for everyone here at CLI. We had to suspend all non-residential, facility-based services in March of 2020. We were fortunate to be able to reassign the majority of our day services' staff to support people in their homes, either in one of CLI's Alternative Living Units (ALUs) or supporting people in more independent living situations through personal support services.



Where we once all met in person, we now use virtual tools like Zoom to make sure the people we support remain engaged with their friends and families, and have the opportunity to enjoy fun activities. Music therapy, yoga, reading club, and bingo are particularly popular, but other activities include celebrating birthdays, playing games, and tracking the development of the young pandas at the National Zoo via the Panda-Cam.



Throughout the pandemic, we've continued to support several essential employees via supported employment services. As of March 2021, many others have returned to their jobs, and CLI currently supports 24 people in community-based employment.

WHAT'S NEW



Throughout this process, we've continually had to consider a variety of factors, while focusing on the well-being of those we support and our staff, remaining flexible, and simply being kind to one another. Though it's been a challenging year for everyone, we are grateful for what we've learned:

- We've learned to be creative in our programming in ways we never would have considered before.
- We've learned that the word "impossible" is meaningless.
- We've learned that together, as a team, we can accomplish anything.
- We've learned that routine is essential but it is what you make it. And we can create amazing schedules out of very little when we have the right attitude and the right tools.
- We've learned that the community of Frederick has to be the most supportive, kind, giving community out there. And we are beyond lucky to work and live here.



We're hoping that the worst of this pandemic is behind us, and we can't wait to return to normalcy someday soon!

WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Here are some ways you can help!

Make a donation

As a nonprofit, CLI is always in need of donations. If you are interested in supporting us, please visit www.communitylivinginc.org.

Spread the word

One of the biggest things you can do to help is to spread the word, not just about our organization, but about the importance of inclusion. Be an advocate!

Apply for a Job

Interested in a career with CLI? We have open positions available! Contact our HR department at kimd@clifrederick.org or call 301-663-8811 for more info!

Volunteer

We love our volunteers! We cater volunteer opportunities to each person, so you can do whatever is most fulfilling to you. For more information, email Elaina at elainal@clifrederick.org.



STAY CONNECTED

Keep up with CLI! We're basically everywhere, but you can definitely find us in these four places:

Email List

Sign up for our email list to stay up to date on events, volunteer opportunities, and more. We don't spam (we email about once a month).

[Sign up here.](#)

Website

To learn more about what we do, feel free to visit our website:

www.communitylivinginc.org

Facebook

We're on Facebook!

"Like" our page and please share it so your friends can do the same!

[Visit our Facebook page here.](#)

Instagram

We're on IG too!

Give us a follow and ask your friends to follow, too!

[Find us on IG here.](#)