



Community Living at Warehouse Cinemas for a movie night

## Fall Connections

Welcome to the Fall 2025 edition of Connections! Things are winding down from a summer of fun, but we still have some very exciting updates coming from some of our departments, including Residential Services, Quality Assurance, Support Services, and our Meaningful Day Program. Also, we will receive an important message from our CEO Michael Planz.

We're excited to share some recent highlights from around Community Living! First, Debra, our Director of Residential, shares updates on summer activities. Then, Quality Assurance offers a fun recap of their Bingo Night featuring the Flying Cows, along with a celebration of Starr and Colleen's graduation from the Partners in Policymaking program. Support Services extends a special dedication to Iman Hart. Meanwhile, Meaningful Day shares its congratulations to those who have secured internships and jobs and warmly welcomes the new members joining the Day Program.

If you're interested in learning more about these amazing happenings, then keep reading!



## A Message from our CEO, Michael Planz

Community Living celebrated Direct Support Professional (DSP) Recognition Week from September 7th through September 13th. This week of celebration, started by ANCOR in 2008 is an annual celebration of the men and women who support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities every day.

Organizations such as ANCOR or the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals have long advocated to ensure DSPs receive the recognition they deserve including recognizing the role as a profession that requires unique training and skills. If you try to find a job classification for DSP you will see things such as home health aide, or nursing assistant. While all admirable, DSPs often work in situations where they have to make decisions independently to deal with what may be happening at any given moment. That is part of the challenge in providing community based supports.



DSPs in Maryland receive extensive training upon hire, including first aid, CPR, behavior support training, and completion of a 20-hour course that credentials them as Certified Medication Technicians, allowing them to administer medications to the people they support. But the training doesn't stop at hire: DSPs receive ongoing training on Person Centered Plans and Nursing Care Plans, as well as updating their certifications on a regular basis.

Many DSPs work early in the morning, evenings, and even weekends to support someone on a job. Residential DSPs stay overnight in CLI homes to make sure people supported in residential services remain safe and healthy.

On a daily basis, the role presents unique challenges, but Community Living DSPs rise to meet those challenges every day. So, if you have a family member who is supported by a Direct Support Professional, take the opportunity to say "Thank You" not just during DSP Recognition Week but every day.

- Michael, CEO





## Residential Department

“This year really snuck up on us, and then flew right by!

We have an outstanding group of team players in the Residential Department, creating endless possibilities for everyone we serve. A big thank you to our QA Department for helping our staff and people supported stay active over the summer with sporting events, theater outings, plays, movies, concerts, and so much more. We’re looking forward to more fun times ahead and countless memories to be made. Stay tuned!

We currently have a few homes with openings. If you know someone who would love to live with some truly amazing people, please reach out to schedule a tour!”

- Debra,  
Director of Residential Services



Alex (left), Connor (center), and Aaron (right) at the National Zoo



Steve, (left), Jeb (center), and Steven (right) at a Commanders preseason game







## Quality Assurance

### PIP Graduation

Congratulations to Starr and Colleen! They graduated from the Partners in Policymaking program last month. This was a huge accomplishment, and we are so proud of them!

The Maryland Partners in Policymaking program teaches individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their family members leadership skills and the process of developing positive partnerships with elected officials and other legislative officials on issues that impact the lives of people with IDD.

Over the past year, Starr and Colleen have shown incredible dedication as self-advocates. They invested more than 90 hours in classes, field trips, and working on their capstone project, which they presented to their peers just before the graduation ceremony.

When asked about their experience, both expressed pride excitement. Starr shared “I’m very happy! I am proud of myself for completing my goal. I was able to meet new friends, further my self-advocate skills and journey.” Colleen said, “It was a good experience! I am glad to have been a part of this program and extended my advocacy skills. It feels great to be graduating! I am excited we made it through this program over the past year.”

A special thank you to Matt and Marybeth for supporting Starr and Colleen along this journey! It couldn’t have happened without them!

- Jena, **Community Outreach  
QA Coordinator**



Colleen and Starr at Graduation Ceremony and Celebration



## Quality Assurance

### CLI BINGO! Night ft. The Frederick Flying Cows

Over the summer, Community Living hosted a lively BINGO Night featuring none other than the Frederick Flying Cows, and it was udderly fantastic.

Flying Cow Denmark Slay kicked off the evening with basketball-themed rounds of bingo, handing out prizes to the lucky winners. He also stole the spotlight at the photo booth, snapped Polaroids and signed pictures with many of the people we support.

A special thank you to the Frederick Flying Cows and Denmark Slay for making the night extra special. You helped turn it into a truly mooo-morable event!

Congratulations to all our winners and a big shout-out to Jeb, our grand prize winner!

The Frederick Flying Cows are a professional basketball team in The Basketball League (TBL), based right here in Frederick, Maryland. Many of the people we support are devoted fans, attending every home game and cheering on the team, and hanging out with their beloved mascot, Milkshake!

We were thrilled to host this event and strengthen our connection with this growing community. Here's to more fun partnerships in the future!

- Jena, **Community Outreach**  
**QA Coordinator**



Our grand prize winner, Jeb (left) with Flying Cows player Denmark Slay (right)



Andy Robillard (left) with Flying Cows player Denmark Slay (right)



Group of people playing BINGO!



## SUPPORT SERVICES

### A Dedication to Iman Hart

It is my pleasure to dedicate our section of Connections in memory of Iman Ali Hart.

I remember the very first time that Iman and I went on an adventure, before he had officially started receiving DDA services. His mom, Angela, had a work conflict and needed someone to help take Iman to Annapolis to catch his bus to camp. I gladly volunteered. On that one trip I learned a lot about him. He shared his love for the Dallas Cowboys, wrestling, music, and food. Iman also talked about his desire to move to be closer to his friends. With help from his mom, he made that dream come true and eventually had a basement apartment in Frederick to call his own.

After lots of conversation on the road, Iman said that he was hungry, so we stopped at McDonalds. He ordered a Quarter Pounder with cheese, fries, and a Coca Cola. By the time he was ready to meet the bus, he had three sandwiches, two fries and three cokes. That day, I learned just how much he loved to eat.

When his support services began, Iman quickly made lots of friends and wanted to be involved in everything the community had to offer. And he did exactly that. His smiling face brightened everyone's day, almost everywhere he went.

Though he faced many medical challenges, Iman had an incredible spirit and was determined to try everything, including snowshoeing with a cane. He was an inspiration to many, a great friend, and someone we will all miss deeply, but never forget.

In the near future, we will host an event where folks can share memories of Iman. If you would like to honor his memory, please consider donating to The Monocacy Foundation in his name.

- Carlota,  
Director of Support Services







## SUPPORT SERVICES

**Iman Hart**





## Meaningful Day

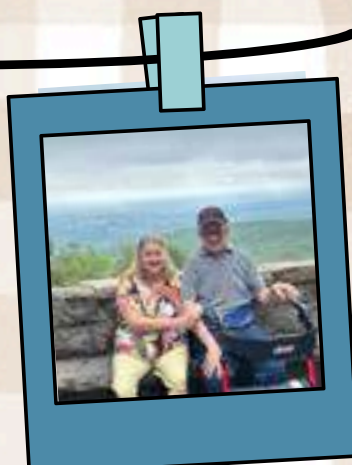


It has been a great summer of meaningful day services! We've continued our partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) and supported two young adults in completing paid summer internships: one at Lee Delauter & Sons, Inc. and the other at Beans & Dreams, both located in Middletown, MD. We also welcomed Aryan and Feivel, who we started supporting in July. Aryan has been making friends while participating in a variety of activities in the community and Feivel was recently offered a full-time job at Anchor Bar in Frederick. Good luck in your new job, Feivel! Congratulations are also in order for Burt, who recently began working at New Hope United Methodist Church in Brunswick. Although he joined us in the spring, we would also like to acknowledge Freddy, who enjoyed his days with CLI so much that he recently increased his participation from three days per week to five. Freddy has developed a particularly good friendship with David and Danny. Many thanks to our direct support professionals, who enrich the lives of those we support in discovering and living their best lives!

- Tom B.,  
Director of Day Services



Jeb (left), Josh (center left),  
Colleen (center right),  
Danny (right) at the mall



Linda (left) and Gerald  
(right) at Gambril State  
Park



Burt vacuuming at his  
new job at New Hope  
United Methodist Church  
in Brunswick



Freddy and David enjoying  
their newfound friendship



## Connect and Stay in Touch 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>**



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