



THE REHABILITATION CENTER

THE COMPASS

A PUBLICATION FOR OUR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS

Family Care, a gift of the heart

It's hard to imagine the historic old house, now a beehive of activity as a home and family care residence, was once the site where Verne Cummins ran the Cummins Cider Mill.

The former cider mill was artfully redesigned with a vaulted cathedral ceiling and winding stairway to an upper loft to make room for an expanding family.

Today, it is home to Verne's nephew, Jerry Cummins and his wife, Deb, who raised their four children there and now provide family care support to Jeff, Bruce and Rhonda who are as much a part of the family as their own four children and seven grandchildren.

"The cider mill is not owned by the family anymore. It's out in Portville, but this area here was where the mill was," Jerry said, gesturing to the large open living area, seasoned with a nautical

theme reflecting Jerry's years in the Navy amid large comfortable furniture for the home's many occupants.

Jerry was born in the house, moved away, but returned with his wife, Deb, to take care of his aging parents and her mom. Verne passed away in 2007 at the age of 95.

Today, Jerry is a retired paramedic with Allegany Rescue EMS. Deb, who was a nursing assistant at Olean General Hospital where she worked with children with some disabilities, still feels a strong commitment to nurturing and supporting others. For both, it was a natural decision to support people in the Family Care program in their home.

Both Jerry and Deb have a long history of supporting people with disabilities which has set the tone for the entire family. Their compassion and

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InTandem Solutions empowers lives

InTandem Solutions, the Agency's new social enterprise, is off to another great year raising revenues for the Agency's important work of empowering lives.

In addition to offering customized supply chain solutions for assembly, packaging, order fulfillment, warehousing, and liquidated goods processing, it is also providing a work opportunity for people the Agency once supported. Some of its employees who formerly worked in its work center are now working alongside others from the community.

This idea of "working together," conceptualized in the social enterprise's brand name, InTandem Solutions, offers everyone an opportunity to work together regardless of limitation.

By generating non-governmental revenues, InTandem Solutions runs as a for-profit to benefit the non-profit Rehabilitation Center. Due to cuts in recent government funding along with legislation calling for the elimination of "sheltered workshops," agencies like ours throughout New York State are

implementing alternative means to meet both requirements.

InTandem Solutions is doing just that - creating an alternative funding stream that provides employment for the people who once worked in the Agency's work centers.

Case in point is Raymond who works at InTandem Solutions. He first came to the Agency when he was only two years old. He began in the Agency's former Children's Learning Center while his mother worked in Salamanca SubCon.

He attended Salamanca schools and later graduated from BOCES in Ellicottville in Special Ed.

There, he gained skills in auto body, heavy machinery, but his main classes were in yard maintenance and landscaping. He worked in SubCon Salamanca for several years until recently when he moved out of the Agency's work center to work for InTandem Solutions.

"Raymond is a



Jeff, left, and Raymond work together packaging upflush toilets to ship out to customers as part of InTandem Solutions' fulfillment business.

warehouse technician," Nancy Giardini, production manager at SubCon, said proudly of the energetic young man she's watched grow up. "He started at the Agency as a person we support, and went from working in the Agency's work center to now working as a regular employee at InTandem Solutions. That is a huge step toward independence."

Raymond, 37, lives in a Family Care residence provided by Jeff and Hazel Buchanan. In addition to earning an income, he is gaining important skills leading toward greater independence. He hopes one day to move into an Agency-supported apartment. InTandem Solutions has business contracts with a boot supplier providing fulfillment through on-line orders to national and international customers.

Other business contracts include a novelty business requiring packing and shipping to distributors and warehousing in Olean; and an on-line up flush toilet supplier which required secondary packaging and shipping. InTandem Solutions is also the exclusive supplier for the entire product line of Disney-licensed "Star Wars" USB drives sold at Staples and Office Depot stores which InTandem packages and ships.

While InTandem Solutions is a social enterprise, developed to make money, it is equally designed to empower people by providing opportunities for increased independence and greater quality of life.



Raymond at age two in the Children's Learning Center.

Medicaid 'rate rationalization' spurs growth

In recent years, the ReHab Center, along with hospitals, nursing homes and other health-related agencies in New York State, has been facing cutbacks in Medicaid.

Most affected were the Agency's programs offered through New York State's Office for People with Developmental Disabilities, OPWDD. Regional fees levied on these programs forced them to run at a loss.

On the other hand, the Agency's larger residential programs have been producing a surplus. This allowed the Agency to comfortably balance the losses from the OPWDD programs by diverting the surpluses to make up the difference.

Now, due to the federal government's tighter control over Medicaid expenditures through its Rate Rationalization, that's all changed.

"Rate Rationalization is just one element of New York State's required compliance with the Center for Medicaid Services," Patrick Sullivan, "Sully," the Agency's Senior Financial Analyst, said.

Financial surpluses generated by the Agency's residential programs (which include supervised IRA's, Supportive IRA's, Day Programs such as Day Habilitation and Pre-Vocational Services), currently used to subsidize the OPWDD programs, will no longer be allowed under Rate Rationalization.

"The Rate Rationalization process is scheduled to require all affected OPWDD programs and services to operate at a break even point by June 2018," Sully said. "This projects a loss of \$200,000 of Medicaid revenue to the Agency."

As the Agency moves toward the full implementation of Rate Rationalization, it will be required to efficiently fund programs and develop growth opportunities to offset those projected losses.

The ReHab Center proactively anticipated these coming changes, and has built its social enterprise, InTandem Solutions, which generates non-governmental revenues. It has also diversified its funding streams by offering more behavioral health services and services for the aging, in addition to its current pursuit of unification with NYSARC Niagara County Chapter.

However, this also means the Agency will continue to look to the community for support through contributions to the Foundation by participating in the 2017 Seafood Fest, the Foundation's Annual Appeal, and other events. To make a donation or learn more, see

<http://www.rehabcenter.org/donate/>

All these events allow the Agency to showcase its innovative services and programs while inviting the community to support its mission to empower and enhance the lives of the people we support, guiding them in the pursuit of their goals and greater independence.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

The 2016 Annual Campaign ended strong, all thanks to the generous community and staff support. We can't thank you enough! Your donations allow us to financially assist our programs and support services, and help the people we support in a time of need.

We are excited to announce that we have kicked off the new year with our agency's "staff appeal" fundraiser, and for the second year in a row more than 77 percent of staff have committed financially. Such a high number is unheard of, and demonstrates how strongly our staff believe in our mission and the valuable work we do.

Family Care,



Jeff, left, and Bruce, who live together at the Cummins, feel the friendly bonds of family.

their children who are also in caring professions, and even in their grandchildren who grew up among the people the family has supported in the Cummins' home throughout the past 25 years.

"I've always had an overwhelming need to help other people," Deb said. "As a child, I thought I'd like to be a nurse, then I saw a different plan. I like being able to interact with people and help them.

"Our being together like this is a blessing. As my children were growing up, they learned to respect people with disabilities. Because of it, my children and grandchildren are comfortable with people who are different."

Deb shared an incident involving her son who was a security guard at the casino at the time. When he noticed someone in a wheelchair having a seizure, he immediately stepped in to help, surprising people around him who were unsure how to react.

"It's just a seizure," Deb recalled him saying to

the people as he stepped in to help the young man.

"My son knew all about seizures from his experience with the people here," she said. "Too often people are afraid of people with disabilities. Our work in Family Care has been a real benefit to all of our children and grandchildren."

Her loving, but no-nonsense nurturing style has won her the respect of her children, grandchildren and the many people she and Jerry have supported over the years.

"I tell Deb and Jerry, you guys are my second mother and father," Jeff said, smiling affectionately at Deb.

"Jeff is going to stay with us as long as we can take care of him," Deb said.

Jeff worked at SubCon for 30 years on jobs from the loading dock to folding boxes and assembling cups.

The other residents include Bruce, who has lived with the Cummins for five years and attends Continuing Day Treatment, CDT, and Rhonda who attends Lifeskills. They have bonded almost as siblings.

"Jeff is like my big bro, and Deb is like, *mom*," Bruce said.



John enjoys playing with his cat Sylvester who is a new member to the Pettie family care residence where he has been living for 26 years. John also works for SubCon Cleaning.

a gift of the heart

From front

Before Deb and Jerry stepped up as Family Care providers, they tested the waters by providing respite which is a short term care.

There are more than a dozen Family Care Providers, who provide a caring home to 23 individuals.

Another caring Family Care provider is Suzanne Petti who has been providing Family Care for 27 years to John who works for the Agency's SubCon Cleaning. He earns an income from his job and is able to purchase his own clothes and care for his own, beloved cat, Sylvester.

Suzanne describes John as kind, neat, responsible and an important part of their family.

Raymond, who works at the Agency's InTandem Solutions and was formerly a person we supported, also lives in a Family Care residence.

He is a perfect example of someone who has matriculated out of the Agency's work center and is now employed in the "real world" working environment of InTandem Solutions. He began his relationship with the ReHab Center as a child



Virginia and Verne Cummins at the Cummins Cider Mill in Allegany.

in the former Children's Learning Center.

Family Care providers ensure all medical appointments are met, medications are taken on time, and encourage people to learn new skills to live more independently which include personal hygiene, cooking, recreation, employment and money management, and keeping their rooms clean. They keep a regular schedule, usually go to work or attend day services, and usually participate in family vacations and holidays.

The Family Care program was started in New York State 85 years ago. The Agency's program was begun by Mike MacWilliams in 1988. Currently, the Agency has 13 providers who support 23 people with disabilities.

Each Family Care provider receives monthly room and board payments for each individual living in the home. A Difficulty of Care payment is also allocated monthly according to the needs of the individual.

For more about the Family Care program, please contact Linda Cavana at 375-4747, ext.

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Raymond lives in a Family Care residence where his journey toward independence has been supported. Now, he works at InTandem Solutions.



Supported Employment makes a perfect blend at Union Tea Cafe



Nicole Herbert, left, whose new job working as a dishwasher at the Union Tea Cafe, has met the delight of Owner Amy Sherburne.

The answer came this winter when they opened their tea cafe, adjoining the renovated OBI building on 301 N. Union St., Olean.

Immediately their tea cafe was a big hit in Olean. In fact, it's so busy, the Sherburnes decided to reserve offering their High Tea for Sunday afternoons in February, simply because their cafe is too busy during the week for the delicate, leisurely traditional English tea.

A portrait of the Queen's coronation, crystal chandeliers and a fireplace displaying items from the Victorian era might seem out of place in an Olean cafe. Quite the contrary.

The city's newest business, the Union Tea Cafe and Tea Shop, is a hit with the locals. Offering more than 90 different teas and a delightful pallet of English tea pastries along with delicious and healthful American and Middle Eastern cuisine, the cafe is a jewel in the city's emerging business district.

The tea shop and eatery is the culmination of a lifelong dream for its owner Amy Sherburne in a couple unexpected ways. She had always hoped to open her own restaurant and cafe, and to help people.

"I've always had a passion to cook," she said, noting she began cooking as a young girl beside her mother and grandmother.

"It's part of our culture," she said, smiling, "I'm Lebanese."

And, the artful Lebanese love to help people almost as much as they love to cook. So, cooking and making a difference in someone's life, someone who needed an opportunity, seemed to fit together.

"A couple years ago, my husband and I discovered a unique tea shop in Upstate New York where they bring a pot of tea to the table and offer a large selection of teas," she said. "We love tea and asked ourselves why don't we have something like this in Olean."

The second part of Amy's goal was found as soon as Nicole Herbert, who has been with the Employment Connection's Supported Employment program, came in for an interview, dressed to start work as a dishwasher right away.

"We were impressed with Nicole and decided to give her a chance," Amy said.

The Supported Employment program, which has 50 people currently employed and 15 job searching, places people in jobs with local employers and provides on-going job coaching to ensure a successful employment outcome.

"Nicole is such a great fit, just perfect right from the beginning," Amy said. "I'm happy to see her come into work. She has a system and does it right."

"As a business owner, it can be a challenge to find the right person for a job and when that happens, it's a great feeling. You try to put people in positions in which they'll do well."

The Union Tea Cafe is open Monday through Thursday 8:30 am to 6 pm; Friday 8:30 am - 8 pm, and Saturday 8 am - 3 pm. In February, high tea will be offered on Sundays. Stay tuned for more on their website: www.unionteacafe.com.

For more on Supported Employment: www.rehabcenter.org/

Community Habilitation and Respite, a lifestyle of caring

Fresh out of college and armed with a degree in Recreation Leadership, Maureen Boza started her career with the ReHab Center bursting with enthusiasm to make a meaningful difference in the lives of the people we support.

When she began in 1979, it was as a care professional at a former residence on State Street. A year later, Maureen became recreation director for SubCon, a grant-funded position she held for eight years. When she married and began her family, she took a leave of absence from the Agency.

When she returned, it was as a Direct Support Provider for Community Habilitation and Respite (which includes Saturday Rec and GAP), a position she has held now for 24 years.

Currently, Maureen visits five people twice a week in the course of a month. At other times, she has visited up to 10 people. Her visits entail going into the homes of people with disabilities who live with their parents. In this role, which is much like that of a mentor or life coach, she helps the people she visits set goals and become more independent.

"This program is very person-centered," Maureen said. "When we do the intake, we ask the individuals what goals they want to work on."

During some of her visits, she takes the individuals into urban areas such as the YMCA where they ride the bike, walk the track or go swimming, and a wide range of activities through which they learn other real world life skills.

"When I go into their homes and teach them life skills, that helps them be a better part of their family. If they have siblings, I help them interact with each other. Sometimes we play games," she said. "Everything – from learning to eat healthy foods to learning social skills – is a teachable moment."

She also ensures the individuals' needs for items their families could not provide are met. She purchases boots or clothing for them at her own expense.

"Maureen really shines. She shows the love, care and respect the Agency is all about," her supervisor, Mary Ellen Gangemi, Behavioral Health Services Manager, said.

Mary Ellen said Maureen's creative ideas, which have led to unique projects with the



Maureen and Nasir enjoy working out together at the Olean YMCA.

individuals she supports, have inspired the entire department.

"Maureen's positive attitude and enthusiastic willingness to do whatever needs to be done is a real asset to the Community Hab and Respite program, and to the whole agency," Mary Ellen said.

Her open, friendly and out-going personality sets the tone for all her relationships as she builds a trusting rapport with each individual.

"I put myself in their shoes – look at it from their perspective and try to feel what it's like for them," Maureen said. "And that includes their parents."

As she warmly affirms the people she works with, she helps them learn the skills they need to become more independent.

They soon became like an extended family, gathering for all kinds of occasions and reasons – birthday or Christmas parties, picnics, garage parties.

"We would just find a reason to hang out together, and that includes parents and other families," she said.

Some of her individuals live in remote areas of northern Cattaraugus County where there is no public transportation. As she built relationships with each family, she also found ways to bring all the families together to create a supportive network that would reduce any sense of isolation they felt.

As some of the individuals are high functioning, they are able to volunteer at places such as The Pines Nursing Home or ring the bell for the Salvation Army's red kettle at Christmas.

"Volunteering teaches them responsibility," Maureen said. "All of this makes them part of the community."

As Maureen's three children were growing up, they grew up with some of the individuals and learned to naturally care for others and respect people who may be different.

"They loved it because we would play games with them. It taught my kids total respect for people with disabilities," Maureen said, recalling one occasion when her son was young and as they were sitting at the table together, she turned around and found her son feeding the young man.

"My son didn't think anything of it. He just did it naturally," she said, adding today, her son is an adult working in human services.

Maureen's work is so much more than just a career. It is the lifestyle she loves, one in which she – and her family – receive as much as they give to others with disabilities. She is among 23 other care providers, who provide support to close to 80 individuals.

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www.rehabcenter.org
www.rehabcenter.org/foundation

THE REHABILITATION CENTER

The ReHAbilitation Center is a non-profit agency supporting people with developmental disabilities, behavioral health issues and Autism Spectrum Disorders. The Agency provides comprehensive services to more than 1100 people. Since 1958, the ReHab Center has been improving the quality of life and maximizing independence for people in our community.

OUR MISSION

Enhancing the lives of people with disabilities through supports and services.

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