

November 2021 | Advocates Incorporated

STRONGER TOGETHER

ADVANCING INCLUSION | EMPOWERING LIVES | CREATING COMMUNITY



A Note from Amy

Dear Friends:

By taking the time to intentionally notice and appreciate the resilience and growth of the people around us and within ourselves, we give ourselves the gift of gratitude. As the holidays approach and 2021 comes to a close, I encourage you to take a moment to be inspired by the examples of hope and success that are often just beneath the surface all around us. Spotlighted in this newsletter are Chase, Leslie and Elyssa - three examples of people shining their light when we need it most.

I am grateful to the people we support, families and employees for their daily examples of how we can help each other succeed together, one small step at a time. We are all thankful for our community supporters, who generously demonstrate that they believe in the people that we serve and in Advocates' mission and much as we do!

On behalf of Advocates, I wish you and your loved ones good health and happiness in 2022. Happy holidays from our family to yours.

Amy Dugliss, Executive Director



MISSION STATEMENT

Advocates is a person-centered not for profit organization that empowers individuals with developmental disabilities to direct their own lives and create a vision for their future.

Together we advocate for a future where people with developmental disabilities can fully participate in their homes, schools, and communities in a meaningful way.

COVID-19 VACCINATION BOOSTER: HOW TO SCHEDULE

Governor Hochul encourages New Yorkers who are 18 and older and feel at risk to get their COVID-19 booster dose. This includes individuals who received their Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna initial vaccine series at least six months ago or the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine at least two months ago. New Yorkers may feel at increased risk of COVID-19 because of their occupational or institutional setting – meaning where they work or live. Individuals who have questions about their risk are encouraged to consult with their primary health care providers.

For more information, visit: <https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/booster-doses>

To find a location near you and to schedule your COVID-19 booster:

- **Online:** Visit www.vaccines.gov
- **Text:** Text your zip code to 438829
 - **Call:** 1-800-232-0233
 - **TTY:** 1-888-720-7489

AMAZON SMILE: EVERY LITTLE BIT COUNTS!



This holiday season, we ask that you consider designating Advocates as your charity of choice when you shop on Amazon. With every eligible purchase, AmazonSmile will donate 5% to Advocates. It's easy! All you need to do is designate Advocates as your charity of choice. We are registered as **Advocates Inc.**

Thank you for your anticipated support!

“I wouldn’t be where I am today, if it weren’t for Jaylin’s Mentors at Advocates.” - Jessica O’Donnell (Parent)

INDEPENDENT LIVING THROUGH SELF-DIRECTION



Presenters: Amy Dugliss, Executive Director | Beth Henderson, Director of Operations | Reina Campbell, Housing Navigator, Broker Supervisor

In late October, representatives from Advocates’ residential team presented “Independent Living Through Self-Direction: Putting the Pieces Together” at the 2021 Cerebral Palsy of NYS Annual Conference. This statewide conference presented an array of sessions to help us collectively navigate forward in positive and exciting ways by becoming better practitioners, caregivers, and advocates.

Advocates’ presentation focused on Self-Direction and the many approaches used to design supports that are best for an individual to help reach his or her unique independent living goals. Topics included getting started with the Self-Direction process and how to leverage a person’s budget to support non-certified independent living. Discussions also focused on self-hired staffing, Residential Coordination, Paid Neighbor and Live-in Caregiver components, and multiple ways to put the pieces together based on Residential Person-Centered Planning through Housing Navigation.

If you are interested in learning more about residential planning or Advocates’ Housing Navigator service, please contact info@advocatesincorporated.org.

MEET CHASE SALMONS

"I want to live life to the fullest."

Chase Salmons is doing just that.

In many ways, Chase, 20, is living the life of every young adult. He has career aspirations, many hobbies and interests, and enjoys spending time with his friends, family, and dog, Zeus. Some of Chase's hobbies include fishing, painting, nature, photography, listening to music, and watching the NCIS series on television.

Chase lives an active and fulfilling life, centered around a loving and supportive family dynamic. The bonds with his parents and brother, Brian, mean everything to him and are the backbone of his support system. Chase's strong family ties go beyond those with whom he lives. Each morning, he starts his day with a phone call to his grandfather.

"What do you got, Gibbs?" Chase asks his grandfather, a reference to a popular line from NCIS. From there, he and his grandfather report to each other the various wildlife they spot in their respective yards. They often see rabbits, squirrels, chipmunks, deer, and even groundhogs. By connecting with another loved one in his circle of support, this morning ritual helps set the tone for Chase's day.



Regardless of what Chase has on his agenda on a given day, he does it with an upbeat and positive attitude. While he enjoys pursuing activities that interest him, he gets even greater satisfaction in helping others. Chase volunteers at the CNY Cat Coalition

- one of the area's leading animal welfare groups,

focused on cat and kitten rescue and adoption. In this initiative, Chase plays with his feline friends, cleans their cages, and interacts with people who are interested in adopting a cat. Chase also volunteers at Meals on Wheels in Syracuse. He enjoys



navigating to seniors' houses to deliver them meals. In his pursuit to help people in different ways, Chase has been instrumental in the formation of Advocates' Art Gallery, located in the main hallway of the Liverpool office. Becoming the Manager of the project has been gratifying to Chase, as his efforts have brightened the hallway and enabled others to proudly display their artwork at the same time. Chase's contributions and confidence to give back in meaningful ways are bolstered in knowing he has the support of his Mentors through Advocates.

Chase aspires to be a federal agent or forensic scientist, to own a Dodge Charger like the one his television hero drives, and to live independently in the future. When asked if he has a dream destination, Chase answered without hesitation - "Florida!" Being near water is soothing to him, and the beach is Chase's "happy place." And as is the case for all of us, that's Chase's ultimate goal - to find happiness despite life's challenges.

"You can do it, Gibbs; you can get through hard times," Chase and his mother often say to each other.

With his persevering nature, the support of those around him, and above all, his positive outlook, Chase is destined to be successful and overcome anything life throws his way.

EMPLOYEE RESOURCES

Advocates is able to provide quality person-centered services because of the dedication, passion, care and experience that our employees bring to work each and every day.

Advocates offers a comprehensive benefits package for full-time employees, which includes health insurance, dental care, paid time off, Employee Assistance Program, life insurance and a 403b Retirement Plan. All current employees are eligible to participate in our 403b Retirement Plan! To enroll in Advocates' 403b Retirement Plan, please visit our website at www.advocatesincorporated.org, and click on the Information/Resources tab, and follow the "Click Here for Current Employee Resources" button.



Advocates also offers Professional Development hours which may be completed online through Relias training courses. All full-time employees are eligible for 40 Professional Development hours per year and are encouraged to use this time to enhance skills and knowledge by enrolling in topics of interest. Employees can browse over 300

courses in the Relias library!

In addition to providing continuous opportunities for employee feedback through regular communication with Training and Support Specialists and supervisors, our leadership team values the contributions and ideas of every employee. We encourage our employees to share their feedback by contacting us at anytime. All employees are invited to contact any member of the leadership team by calling the office at (315) 469-9931 or by emailing teamwork@advocatesincorporated.org

To our employees, thank you for all that you do to support people and their families as a part of the Advocates team!



Advocating for People with Disabilities

ANCOR's mission is to be a "leader, resource and advocate for a diverse private disability services network that ensures full citizenship and engaged community participation for people with disabilities of all ages."

As a national association, ANCOR represents private providers of community living and employment supports and services. They support advocacy for the needs and interests of people with disabilities before Congress and Federal agencies, "advocating for the crucial role private providers play in enhancing and supporting the lives of people with disabilities and their families."

Using the "ANCOR Amplifier" online advocacy tool is a simple way to make your voice heard. Please visit:

<https://www.ancor.org/amplifier>

MEET LESLIE PERKINS

Finding a Voice

Leslie Perkins has a lot to say these days. Her loved ones and those with whom she works say she is content and loving life. Sadly, this hasn't always been the case for her.

Leslie, 54, has received services from Advocates for four years. Prior to this, she participated in a certified day program, where many of her daily activities were predetermined for her. She mostly kept to herself and felt she couldn't express her desires, needs, or goals. Those closest to Leslie say that a lot of this changed when she joined Advocates, and her demeanor has followed suit. "Her communication and socialization skills have grown tremendously since we started working together," said Kristin Smith, who has acted as Leslie's Mentor since Leslie first began receiving services through Advocates. "When we first met, she couldn't verbalize her wants, and this was a barrier." This barrier would quickly be overcome, as Leslie and Kristin formed an instant bond.

Almost immediately upon working together, Leslie began verbalizing more with Kristin. Leslie was able to express things like what she wanted for lunch or where she wanted to go that day. The rapport the pair had built gave Leslie the confidence to communicate with others in her community as well.

"I'm happy," Leslie told us while visiting one of her favorite spots in town – McDonald's. Though she loves their french fries, she enjoys the atmosphere and interacting with the restaurant's staff much more. It's a place where she feels safe and welcome, as the employees often stop over to her table to chat.

One real area of progress for Leslie is being able to communicate things that bring her happiness. She enjoys artwork, volunteering, bowling, meeting with friends, and visiting area lakes and parks. Exploring these and other interests gives Leslie satisfaction



because it is she who chooses to do them. It is her contentment that gives those closest to her a similar sense of satisfaction.

"Leslie's relationship with Kristin and Advocates in general has opened doors for her," said her brother, Robert. One of those doors is volunteer opportunities. Leslie generously lends her time to Iroquois Nursing Home in Jamesville. There, she helps with group activities and takes an active role in boosting the morale of the residents. By reading a book with them or even just

spending a few minutes together, Leslie's big heart and infectious smile brighten the day of everyone she encounters.

"I'm instantly in a good mood when I see her because she's always so happy," said Leslie's Community Habilitation Coordinator with Advocates, Sarah Cowles. "It's been a pleasure seeing her blossom and advocate more for herself these past four years." Through this self-advocacy and some regular motivation from Kristin, Leslie has shown signs of becoming more independent. With Kristin's support, Leslie takes pride in being able to now make her own lunch, tidy her room, hang clothing out to dry, and work on her culinary skills through a cooking group. "It's one of those situations where we've found soulmates," Sarah said, referring to Leslie and Kristin. "Seeing their relationship and how they're always smiling together makes me really appreciate my job."

Everyone has a multitude of things to convey, and everyone has the right for their voice to be heard. Leslie is a prime example that sometimes, all it takes is the right group of people and a little positive reinforcement to hear just how beautiful a person's voice truly is. The best part is that we're hearing more than just Leslie's voice these days...we're hearing how she wants to live her life.

DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION WEEK

In September, Advocates paid special tribute to Direct Support Professionals, whose critical supports for people with disabilities enables them to live, work, and thrive in their communities.

It is through the hard work of the more than 1,150 Advocates Mentors that we are able to provide individuals with disabilities and their families with the highest level of supports and services. Our Mentors are truly the heart and soul of what we do.

At no time in our history has the work of our Mentors been more needed or appreciated than during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their dedication during trying times is a testament to the heart and soul they put into their work!

To our Mentors, we are beyond grateful for your work, not only during Direct Support Professional Week, but every day!



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Advocates is hiring! Advocates is 1,150 employees strong and growing! We are the largest employer providing services to people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities in Central New York.

It is through teamwork that we advance our mission of supporting the success of children and adults with disabilities, strengthening their families, and

building a community of inclusion. Our strength lies in hiring compassionate team members who are passionate about what they do.

Our Recruitment Team works with applicants to find a position that suits their availability, location, and interests so that they can establish a meaningful relationship with individuals they serve while building the schedule they desire to create an overall empowering experience.

If you know of someone who wants to make a difference in their life and the life of others, please have them apply to join our team using the online application on our website found on, www.advocatesincorporated.org/join-our-team

Advocates is an equal opportunity provider and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, gender expression, age, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status in any of its activities or operations.

MENTOR SPOTLIGHT: ELYSSA STALLCUP

Passionate. Diligent. Advocating.

Three words that Elyssa Stallcup says best describe her. Three words that also embody the spirit of mentorship.

Elyssa has been a Mentor with Advocates for more than four years but has been mentoring her twin brothers, both of whom are diagnosed with autism, for as long as she can remember. From an early age, she has played an integral role in their development, helping them with everyday tasks and learning new skills.

Unbeknownst to Elyssa, her personal experience was setting her up for future successes professionally. Her firsthand glimpse of life in the disability world has benefitted her in ways that go beyond a paycheck, however, “I got an enhanced world view because of my brothers, and they opened my eyes in a lot of ways,” she said. Despite knowing of the services her brothers received, it was by sheer coincidence that Elyssa discovered she could work in the disability field herself.



Elyssa (right) with one of her best friends, Hannah.

Soon after this encounter, Elyssa applied for a Mentor position with Advocates, and was quickly hired by a young woman named Hannah. With her evolving skill set, valuable on-the-job experience, and an ever-growing appreciation for work in the disability field, Elyssa aimed to take her career to new heights. She changed her major to linguistics, largely due to having helped Hannah with her goal of refining her skills in both Spanish and English. Working with Hannah in this way and seeing her progression led to Elyssa setting a new goal for herself – to become a teacher for those whose second language is English.

When asked about her accomplishments through her work, Elyssa was quick to show her humility. “I don’t want to take credit for anything Hannah has achieved,” she said. “I love seeing the results, but the strides she’s taken are because of her determination, not anything I did.”

By not seeking praise for her work, Elyssa shows why she is that much more deserving of it. Her earnest desire to provide the best support possible is most apparent – whether it’s to the families she supports, others in the community, or members of Advocates’ staff who have witnessed her person-centered approach. Brittany Jewell, Training and

Support Specialist Supervisor at Advocates, shared with us her recent observation of Elyssa’s exemplary work at our Fayetteville community space.

“She (Elyssa) was asking (the person she supports) how he’d like her to support him differently the next time, or what he’d like to do more independently next time,” Brittany said. “I thought this was great because it makes him aware of what his goals are. Observing them in person was a really great experience.”

Advocates is proud to have a workforce comprised of caring, dedicated people like Elyssa. We thank you for the work you do each and every day!



A TIME OF THANKS

Throughout the year, Advocates offers several fundraising events with proceeds benefiting children and adults with disabilities and their families waiting to receive services.

We are humbled by your generosity and support and want to express our deepest appreciation for helping us reach more families who are in need of critical supports and services.

We would also like to thank the following funders for their support: The Jim & Juli Boenheim Foundation, CNY Community Foundation, NYS DOL, KeyBank Foundation, John Ben Snow Foundation, M&T Foundation, Wells Fargo Foundation, CNY United Way, Amazon, Stewart's Shops, and SEFA.

With gratitude, we sincerely thank you.

“Knowing that the work I do changes peoples’ lives in a positive way is rewarding and what I like most about being a Mentor.” - Josh Salzman

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TOURNAMENT

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16TH ANNUAL CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

Advocates' 16th Annual Charity Golf Tournament, presented by TOMRA, Schupan Recycling, and Wells Fargo Advisors, was held on Wednesday, September 22, 2021 at the Turning Stone Resort Casino. The Tournament was a huge success as our golfers turned out for an afternoon of golf and fun, playing on PGA level golf courses. As our largest fundraising event of the year, all proceeds help us fulfil the mission of Advocates, empowering children and adults with disabilities.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to all of our sponsors, golfers, vendors, and to our committee members who put in many hours of preparation in making our Annual Charity Golf Tournament a tremendous success. We would also like to thank the Turning Stone who was fantastic in providing support for the day of the event. Lastly, we would like to acknowledge and thank our Chairmen: Steve Nee, Josh Nelson, and Scott Harlander for their leadership and tireless efforts. We look forward to working with them in 2022.

We are already planning for next year's Annual Charity Golf Tournament. Please plan on joining us for a day of fun on Wednesday, September 14, 2022. We hope to see you next year!

ADVOCATES' 16TH ANNUAL CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT



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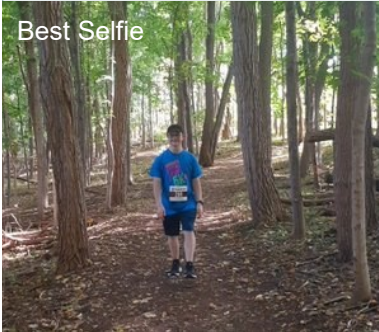
EWG Glass Recovery &
 Recycle Corp.

CONTESTS

Honda City
 Bowers & Company
 SGWS

PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

Best Selfie



Best Background



Best Pet



Best Family Group

ADVOCATES' 3RD ANNUAL STROLL & ROLL 5K

In October, Advocates' 3rd Annual Stroll & Roll Virtual 5K, saw 124 participants spanning three states in the northeast! We are inspired by the great turnout and extend our sincere thanks to all of our participants, sponsors, donors, and committee members who helped make this year's event possible.

We would also like to thank our Chairpersons, Barbara and Jed Delmonico. Their contributions proved invaluable and proceeds from the race will benefit numerous families waiting to receive services.

We would also like to thank



everyone who submitted a photo. We congratulate our photo contest winners who received a \$25 VISA gift card (please see winning photos to the

left). There were so many great photos! Please check out all of the photos on Advocates' Facebook page.

We are already planning for next year's event, which will be held on Saturday, May 7, 2022. We have reserved Willow Bay at Onondaga Lake Park. Join us for an enjoyable day featuring the race, food trucks, celebrity host, auction, entertainment, and more!

Look for more details in our upcoming e-newsletters.

GRATITUDE CHALLENGE WEDNESDAYS

Advocates is pleased to announce the return of Gratitude Challenge Wednesdays in the month of November. Each Wednesday, Advocates will spotlight a topic that people are grateful for, and we'll be looking to hear your thoughts!

Be sure to visit our Facebook page through November 24th, when we will be randomly selecting the names of four people who comment on any of our gratitude posts. The lucky winners will receive something everyone can be grateful for – a \$25 Visa gift card!

We hope you'll join us this month for our "Gratitude Challenge Wednesdays"!

#Advocates #Gratitude #Friends #GratitudeChallengeWednesdays



ADVOCATES' ANNUAL APPEAL

Now more than ever, we are so grateful to our families, donors, community partners, and employees that have celebrated and supported Advocates throughout the years.

At a time when so much feels uncertain, we are encouraged by your dedication to advancing our mission.



“Seeing your child’s untapped potential and providing them with unconditional love are the absolute best things you can do for them.” - Jessica O’Donnell (Parent)



If you are grateful for the supports and services provided by Advocates, please consider supporting those families who are still in need of services by making a gift to this year’s Annual Appeal.

We are very thankful to the John Ben Snow Foundation who will award Advocates with a \$10,000 Challenge Grant if we are able to raise \$10,000 by December 15th. Donations totaling this amount will guarantee Advocates with additional funds to make an even greater impact for people with disabilities and their families. We truly appreciate the John Ben Snow Foundation for having confidence in our ability to raise funds to support children and

adults with disabilities through our Annual Appeal campaign.

Whatever you are able to contribute, you can be assured that your gift will make a profound impact for people with disabilities and their families who are newly in need of services.

To donate, please visit www.advocatesincorporated.org and click on the “Give Today” tab or mail your gift in the envelope that is enclosed with this newsletter.

On behalf of the families whose lives will be touched by your generosity, we thank you for making a difference with your gift!



Reach out to familysupport@advocatesincorporated.org for more information on services

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WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!

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