

A message from Sara Lurie

Chief Executive Officer

As we reach the end of our 2019 Fiscal Year and the end of the year-long Transitions Day Program Redesign, I would like to take a moment to recognize what an extremely difficult year of change and transition it has been for the individuals and families served at Transitions Day Program Sites. I would personally like to thank and honor those served as well as our CMHA-CEI staff members who stayed with the process throughout the year, assisting individuals and families by providing a positive and supportive end to their day program participation as well as supporting their transition to the new skill building model or other services.

Despite the anxiety and concern that comes with such a large scale change, everyone involved showed incredible flexibility and resilience throughout the year. There is still work to be done to continue to build and expand our services in the redesign. I encourage all individuals served to continue to work with their case manager to explore skill building services along with other services and community resources available to assist in living as fully as possible in communities.

I look forward to continued development and many more success stories into the future.

Spotlight Stories: Change is in the Air

Erin Parcell, MA, LPC | Transitions Coordinator

October is here and with it the reminder that change is a constant. We have seen a lot of change in the months since our skill building services shifted and I am excited to be able to touch base with you once again. This month, I am happy to be checking in with the people that we have covered in the past few months to share the growth they have experienced and the progress they have made.

First, I got a chance to check in with Ben a couple weeks ago to ask how things have been going since he got his job at McDonald's. He stated that he is now living in his own apartment and that he works at a new location on the weekends. He has been connected to Disability Network with the benefits counselors and is working on a schedule that fits his needs. He expressed that "it is great" to have his own apartment and he is enjoying doing the things that we all enjoyed about our first place: "moving my furniture where I want, listening to my music, and just hanging out."

Second, I got to speak to Carol a couple weeks ago as well. She shared that she is now at AL!VE without paid staff supports. She instead gets help when needed from her fellow volunteers or the employees at the wellness center. This is all thanks in part to her positive attitude, stick-to-itiveness, advocacy for an updated OT plan, and a community of natural supports. When asked about how she felt about being at AL!VE independently, she replied "I love it." She has now set her sights on how to grow an active social life and has begun to host a coffee hour at her home that she is excited to have others join in.

Lastly, we check in with Scott. He continues to be employed with Helping Hands, doing janitorial and yard work. He has been working with an employment counselor through Peckham and his CMHA-CEI skill building staff as a job coach since his last article. He will be fading from supports at the end of October and is looking forward to increasing from two days of work a week to three.

Despite a rocky start, so many amazing things are happening for people who we support through this new skill building service. In the coming months, we look forward to the many more that are working at transitioning any support needs to natural supports. In addition, we look toward our ability to now open up our service to those that were not being supported by our Transitions programs. More dreaming, reaching, and growing to come!

"Just take any step, whether small or large. And then another and repeat day after day. It may take months, maybe years, but the path to success will become clear." –Aaron Ross



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HCBS COMMUNITY UPDATE NEWSLETTER

Issue 12 | October 2019



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How to Stay Informed



The October 2019 issue of the HCBS Community Update Newsletter is the final monthly edition of the newsletter in its current format. CMHA-CEI has valued having a direct line of communication with you, and we will continue to utilize the newsletter format to keep you updated on the activity of our staff and recipients.

The updated newsletter will be managed by CMHA-CEI's Consumer Advisory Committee and released quarterly. The newsletter will feature the entire agency instead of focusing on one program, and will continue to present familiar topics that connect you to community resources and events, keep you updated on current and new initiatives at CMHA-CEI, and feature spotlight stories of those we serve.

Please continue to visit our website to find the latest information about CMHA-CEI's HCBS transition.

Website: <https://ceicmh.org/services/csdd/hcbs-information>

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