

# OUR COMMUNITY

## *in this Moment*



Mute



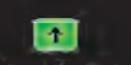
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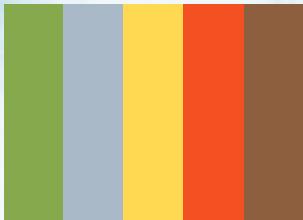


Record



Reactions

Summer 2020



## INSPIRATIONS MAGAZINE

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Springbrook is the leader in providing innovative supports for people with developmental disabilities. With locations across New York State, we offer support options that span all aspects of a person's life.

PLEASE NOTE: Some photos used in this issue of *Inspirations* were captured before the pandemic, or before full home unit protocols were put into place. All home unit rules, regulations, and policies are adhered to across our locations, and anytime a Springbrook photo is taken.



## A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



What a difference a few months have made — in our community, our country, and our world. Before writing this message, I looked back at our last magazine and my welcome letter. Initially, I thought of all the things that have changed for us. The focus, after all, for that edition of *Inspirations* was the Springbrook Master Plan — diversified funding, a full life for a lifetime, and our organizational strength and capacity.

In that welcome letter I detailed how we developed our master plan:

*"We start with what we are doing today. We mix that with the needs of the future. We throw in the external factors that our organization may or may not control..... and we dream. We dream of a future that honors our mission and realizes our vision."*

COVID-19 was an external factor that Springbrook did not expect and could not control. All of us have been put to the test with how we are handling the pandemic, both personally and professionally. While Springbrook could not control the pandemic, we can and do control our response.

We acted quickly. We closed both of our campuses, our office locations, all our

community homes, and on-campus residences to all visitors. We established home units at all of our community and on-campus homes — with day and educational staff assigned to each home unit, working alongside residential staff. In what seemed like the flip of a switch, the administration of our complicated and varied organization became remote — with “back office” employees working from home. Our daily ways of interacting changed, the places we worked changed, and our protocols changed. “Normal” has now come to include daily symptom checks, masks, continual hand washing, Zoom meetings, and remote delivery of supports. What has remained constant is our mission — our unwavering commitment to support people with developmental disabilities and their families.

The heroes of this time at Springbrook are everywhere. They are direct support professionals making a difference with each interaction by encouraging each other, engaging the people we support, and reassuring families. They are the dietary workers making thousands of meals and special treats for residents and staff. They are the maintenance workers delivering meals, supporting the home units, putting up tents for family visits, ensuring our buildings are safe, clean, and accessible. They are the teachers, therapists, behavioral specialists,



Patty and Jamie work on a colorful art project in The Pines Community Home.



*Lots of smiles and fun were had on National Cheeseball Day!*



Vinny works on his gardening skills in the backyard of Walnut Street Community Home.

and nurses working remotely and directly to ensure that hard won gains for students and individuals are not lost. And of course, they are behind the scenes: all of the people making sure that the bills get paid, the PPE is purchased, the paychecks and bonus checks are sent, and the technology to do it all is there and accessible.

At Springbrook, our response was dictated by a shared sense of mission and purpose that enables us to be both transparent and direct in all of our communications with the people we serve, their families, our employees, our board, and our community partners. On reflection, I realize that we have not changed. We have responded. We have adapted. We have remained true to our mission and vision, supported by a master plan that supports our future and the well-being of the people we support, while giving us the power to be nimble and quick in our actions.

Before I close this message, I want to share a few more thoughts not about COVID-19.

On July 26, we celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In 1990, this landmark legislation empowered people with disabilities with equal rights to access, education, and employment. The law sparked awareness and advocacy for the rights of people with disabilities to be treated with dignity and respect.

At Springbrook, the ADA was felt most keenly through New York State's Home and Community

Based Waiver. The HCBS Waiver enabled us to open more than 20 IRAs (Community Homes) for adults, and bring services to people living in the community — services like employment opportunities, respite, and Self-Directed Services for individuals and families.

There is, however, more work to be done. We must respect diversity and expect inclusion. I have spent my entire adult life working to support the needs of individuals and families with developmental disabilities. The disparities over the years have guided my advocacy and decisions. It is with that commitment and awareness that I am so deeply saddened by the inequality and injustices that are part of the lives of people of color in our country. The deep divisions of racism have caused unimaginable hurt and loss for far too long and to too many people. There is no easy answer, but our pledge is to listen, to talk openly, to better understand and accept responsibility for our own actions and to act responsibly.

My hopes for your health and well-being.

# THE SCHOOL AT SPRINGBROOK

## CLASS OF 2020



In a student's time at The School at Springbrook, they develop many essential skills and grow into accomplished young men and women. Students discover passions, create memories with great people, and, when they graduate, carry with them many lifelong friendships. Wherever life takes graduates of The School at Springbrook, they have the entire Springbrook community standing in their corner.

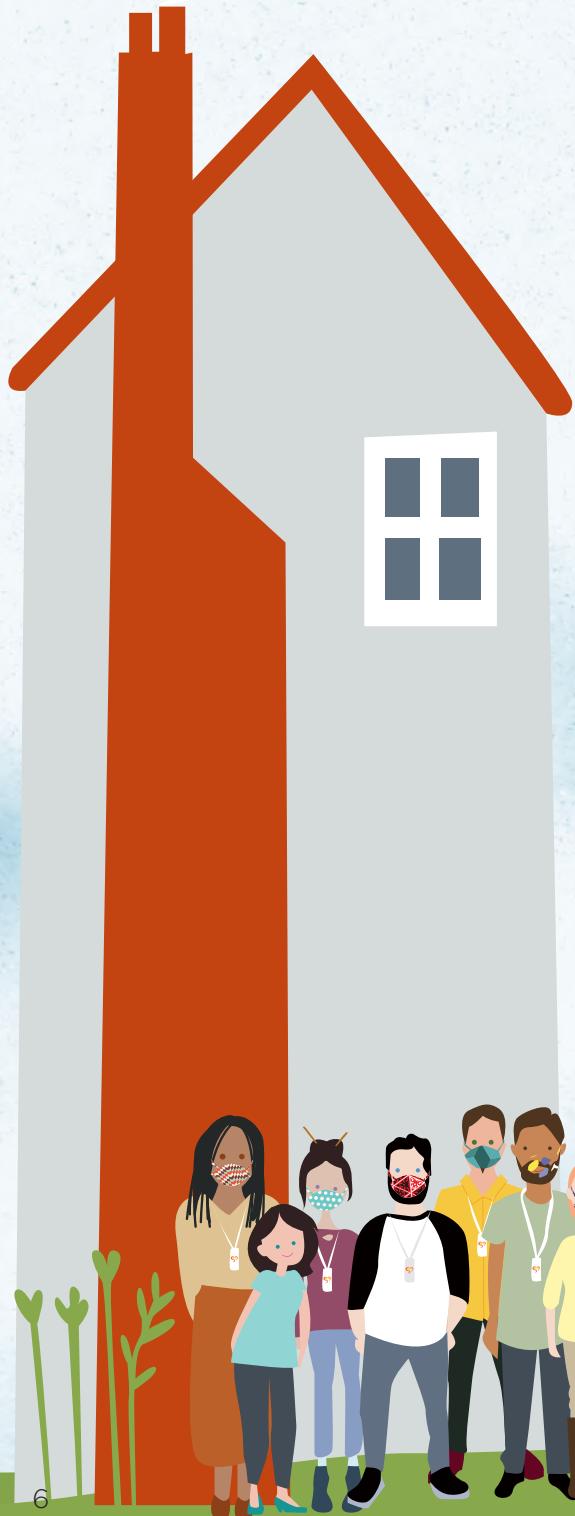
The School at Springbrook Class of 2020 is made up of 11 accomplished young people. Top Row: Reagan Butler, Daniel Ermilio, John Lottermann, Ronald Safdieh, and Ryan Newman; Bottom Row: Louis Mastrantuono, Derrick DeMorier, Beatrice Goff, Dominic Mastrantuono, Triston Salisbury, and Jonathan McLean. This year brought with it unique challenges as the world, our country, state, region, and Springbrook community have all struggled with COVID-19. With health and safety as our priority, we celebrated our graduates with a campus graduation car parade and virtual recognition of graduates. Both "events" allowed proper social distancing and enabled us to celebrate the accomplishments of The School at Springbrook Class of 2020. While circumstances changed how we celebrated, they did not change how immensely proud we are of The School at Springbrook Class of 2020 graduates!

# Virtual GRADUATION

This year, the COVID-19 pandemic changed how we celebrated graduation, but we were determined to find a safe and special way to recognize and honor our 2020 graduating class. After numerous hours of planning and scheduling, we held a virtual graduation. Family and friends from all over the country could tune in and be part of the graduate's special day.



# The HOME UNIT at Springbrook



As of mid-August 2020, as this article is being published, Springbrook is proud of our ongoing record of ZERO infections of COVID-19 among our students and residents. One of the ways we have achieved this extraordinary accomplishment is by implementing home units for all residential programs. In this article, we give some insight into some of the ways our policies and procedures have come together to help mitigate risk, while promoting social and emotional growth and interaction within one of the 25 Springbrook Community Homes or at one of the nine on-campus homes of The School at Springbrook.





## WHAT IS A HOME UNIT?

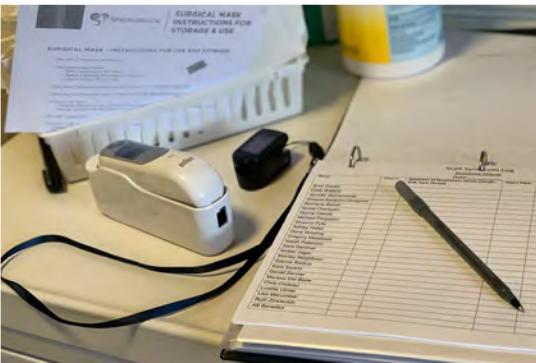
Home units are made up of staff members who work in one (and only one) location. Their support for the residents or students at that location is essential for the people Springbrook supports. Once a staff member arrives for their shift, they complete a personal health screening, including checking their body temperature, pulse, and respirations per minute.

Once properly checked-in, personal protective equipment is used for their entire shift, and staff are required to stay at their work location for the duration of their shift. This means that all breaks occur on Springbrook property, and no errands take place, like “a quick run to the store.” If a staff member is on-the-clock for longer than twelve hours, they will re-check their vitals.

Much like the rest of New York State, Springbrook is taking a fact-based approach in our “reopening.” This includes (as of mid-August) outdoor visitation with up to two family members for an up to two-hour visit, approved community routes for residents and staff to walk while wearing masks, and monitoring best practices from across the country to put safety first for those who choose our programs. This process has been an incredible collaboration between Springbrook’s Clinical and Leadership teams, local health authorities, and families of residents and students from across our programs.



## HOME UNITS



### HOW HAVE WE USED HOME UNITS?

While the majority of home unit staff were already associated with the program where they are assigned, be it Community Homes or The School at Springbrook, there are also day program and educational staff who have been woven into the teams. This is most notable with Community Homes and the integration of Day Habilitation delivered in the home. There are also examples of Employment Services, HCBS, Kids Unlimited Preschool, and Self-Directed Services staff joining home units.

Home units are a combination of residential and programming support for the people who choose our residential programs. Supports that would have been delivered in a program outside of the home are now integrated into the daily routine at the house, with great success.

*From top left, clockwise: One of many check-in stations that exist at each building within our organization; the residents of Walnut Street prepare to plant some seeds in their garden; residents and staff at Walnut Street pose for a photo after completing a craft.*

Springbrook's Community Home at Walnut Street, for example, has embraced gardening as an activity with everyone pitching in to nurture their backyard oasis.

### REMOTE WORK

Beginning on March 16, administrative employees began working from home. Soon thereafter, classroom teachers from The School at Springbrook and therapy staff began

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

delivering education and interventions remotely as well.

Recognizing that there were still essential functions that needed completion, we have worked diligently — if not a little differently — to support the programs that Springbrook is proud to provide. Recruiting and training employees, processing financial activities, keeping technology working efficiently, communicating messages of hope and urgency, and raising funds to support the programming and staff for all of the home units continued to be carried out.



New Employee Orientation Zoom Training

## BUILDING USE

The most prominent news surrounding building use is the return of day students to both Kids Unlimited Preschool and The School at Springbrook. Safeguards have been put in place to limit the physical footprint where students can gather, as well as staggering the times/days in which students are present in the classroom.

Springbrook has adopted protocols to allow infrequent use of administrative space before any long-term planning goes into place for staff to safely return to the office. This includes

Springbrook staff have received training on the proper use of Personal Protective Equipment. Knowing the proper use, cleaning, storage, and disposal of this PPE has been a keen ally in stopping the spread of COVID-19.



staggered access days based on last name, restricted access to conference rooms and break-room spaces, and check-in and check-out procedures which mirror that of the home units. Future plans will include renovations of restroom facilities and exterior entrance doors to allow for contactless entry/exit, as well as adopting technology that can aide in diagnosis and/or contact tracing.

This multi-tiered approach of home units,



## HOME UNITS



Finn and his teacher, Nicole Valentine-Sokolowski, enjoy a book during the first week of in-person teaching for day students at The School at Springbrook.

### Be Part of a Home Unit!



**Sponsor a takeout night for the house, or make a donation that can be used for in-home activities or staff PPE!**

**VISIT:  
[SpringbrookNY.org/  
your-gift-matters](http://SpringbrookNY.org/your-gift-matters)**

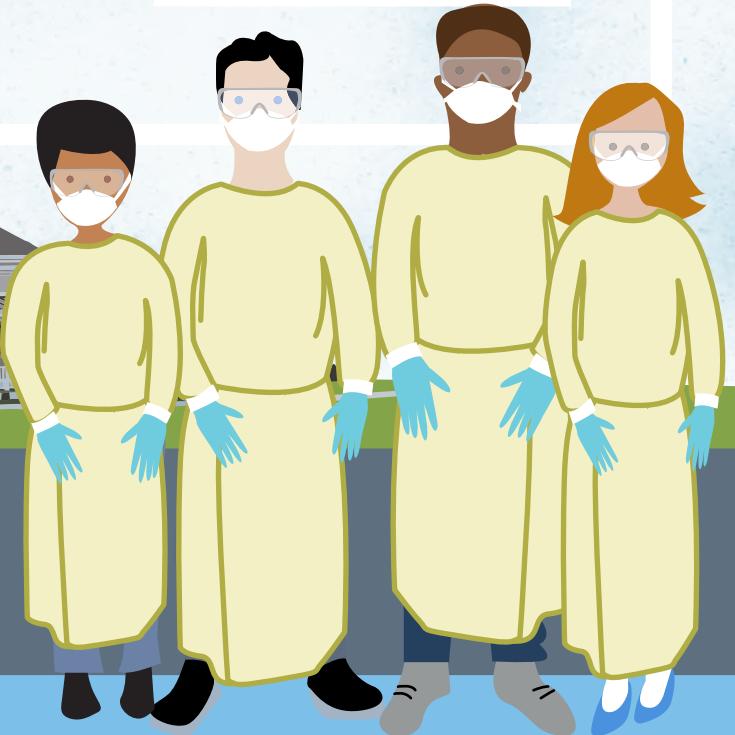


remote work, and effective use of our facilities has been invaluable to our ongoing 0% infection rate for COVID-19 in students and residents. The protection of those who choose our programs, along with our over 1,200 staff members, is of the highest importance to Springbrook. We thank everyone who continues to act with urgency and an abundance of caution to maintain our continuing success in mitigating risk.

Scan the QR Code  
to be taken directly to our  
COVID information page

## READ MORE

If you want to learn more about the specifics of our home units, the intricacies of their check-in procedures, and some additional programming that has happened since mid-March, visit our website at: [www.SpringbrookNY.org/c-19](http://www.SpringbrookNY.org/c-19)



## Emergency Response Team

Springbrook realized the importance of having a proactive approach to this health crisis. So, in mid-April, an Emergency Response Team (ERT) plan was created. This included staff who would be part of an isolation team, using off-line Springbrook facilities, working in 12-hour shifts. It also included the use of the Family Engagement Center suites if the staff member could not effectively isolate themselves from family at home when their shift was complete. Once a resident or student was symptom-free, the staff member would enter a quarantine period until they could safely return to their home unit assignment. While we have not used our ERT for any actual infection, there have been a few instances where isolation took place while testing was pending, and we have been grateful to staff members who joined this critical unit of professionals!



# Education, Therapy, AND Goals

**AT SPRINGBROOK**, our mission has always been supporting people as they lead full and meaningful lives. With that in mind, we have to constantly adapt to the challenges that we face as a community to ensure that we provide the same exceptional service we take pride in. While we work within guidelines set by our state and local governments, Springbrook's clinical, therapy, and educational professionals have been hard at work, creating programs with student and resident needs in mind. While Springbrook programs have changed how they operate, we have also focused on the social and emotional impact of our decisions for everyone who chooses Springbrook for services. We have been creative about how we balance safety, both physical and emotional, with our mission to support people as they live a full life.

Springbrook has been successful at lowering the risk of infection of COVID-19 by the use of personal protective equipment and creating home units. In this article are a few examples of what Springbrook has accomplished over the past several months during Governor Andrew Cuomo's *New York State on PAUSE* initiative.

Education programs for Springbrook students have been a topic of discussion since the start of the pandemic. We finished off the year by using virtual classrooms and had success with the cooperation of our direct support professional staff and the education department. Teachers were delivering lessons over Zoom and also laying out full lesson plans for residential students and day students. These lesson plans were put in place to guide teaching assistants who were stationed in a home unit so they could help students with activities and reaching their goals. This setting allowed the students to receive interaction with some familiar faces in the home unit. Many of the students enjoyed teacher-led science experiments where they could build upon concepts and learn new skills.

Therapy services were also converted to virtual lessons. Therapists have been tasked with assessing the needs of residential students, day students, and residents — making sure all materials are present for them to achieve their therapeutic goals. The staff and teaching assistants in the home unit have been essential

in the success of virtual therapies. Staff make sure students and residents are following their schedule, safely practicing their instructions, and are also ensuring that the virtual lesson communication device is working correctly. Both Springbrook's educational programs and therapy department have worked hand-in-hand to deliver interactive Zoom lessons for students.

Outside of The School at Springbrook — in the Community Homes — Day Habilitation programs were moved into the residences to prevent large groups of residents from different homes coming together in one place. Day Habilitation staff were added to home units and began working on resident goals. Therapists began offering a calendar of unique therapy services that residents could use with the help of the staff. Many other activities are hosted on Zoom with a scheduled list of events, so residents can be a part of things like gardening, BINGO, arts and crafts, and a Friday dance party! Keeping residents engaged is essential, but even more so during visitation restriction, when residents were unable to see their families and friends. This meant keeping activities plentiful, positive, and engaging for the well-being of the residents emotional health.

We know the COVID-19 pandemic has been stressful for the people we support and our staff as teams remain in-home units. Springbrook would like to thank everyone for their commitment, dedication, and positive attitude throughout these extraordinary circumstances. The Springbrook community will continue to adapt and provide the best services and supports with the guidance of our state, local government, and Springbrook professionals while ensuring a creative balance between our mission and the health and safety of everyone who chooses Springbrook for services.



Opposite page: Diana follows cooking instructions while watching a video made by Springbrook's own Alyssa Hall. Top to bottom: A student works on a writing goal; Phoenix practices writing his name; Joe and his staff make some delicious treats in the kitchen.

# Celebrations DURING COVID-19

While health and safety are certainly the priority, we also know that fun, celebrations, and a sense of community are paramount to the well-being of the people we serve.

With this at the forefront of each staff member's mind, the creative, essential staff at Springbrook have made sure that birthdays are celebrated, that home units in the community feel connected, and that residents are able to take part in fun (and important) events like Prom, "Car Parades," and Graduation.

## **ISOLATED, BUT NOT ALONE.**

When home units became the new normal, it became apparent that isolation could eventually take a toll on the men and women who live — and work — in our Community Homes. With Day Habilitation options closed and activities like going to the park, visiting friends, and shopping suddenly unavailable, feelings of isolation became a very real concern. Where students of The School at Springbrook have access to our Main Campus grounds, members of the Community Homes program have significantly fewer options when it comes to staying occupied.

Never having been the type of organization to shy away from a problem, Springbrook resolved to find ways to keep the men and women across the entire organization happy and engaged. With support from the administration, the participants and staff of each residence decided to find out who could show the most Springbrook spirit by decorating their porches, and in some cases, even themselves! From matching shirts at Walnut Street to a beautiful banner at Milford and themed costumes at Ford Avenue, home units showed their respective communities what it really means to be "Springbrook Strong."



Top left, clockwise: Milford, Oak and Elm, and Walnut Street Community Homes show off their Springbrook spirit as they cheer for onlookers during the car parade this past April.

A caravan of therapists, support staff, and administrators drove from house to house to see how each home unit had decided to show their Springbrook spirit. The amazing amount of positivity and enthusiasm that each house demonstrated made it impossible to select a single winner, but at the end of the day nobody was worried about that. It was plain to see that the ability to socialize with their visitors, even from far away, was truly powerful for residents. It is important to feel valued, and this is why our staff go to such great lengths to ensure that each person who receives support from Springbrook feels as such.

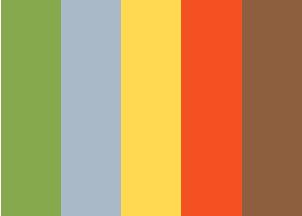
The purpose of this activity was not to determine which Community Home could do the best job decorating their porch, but in reality was an opportunity for the residents and staff at each house to be

reminded that each Community Home, no matter the location, is part of a larger community, and that each individual is a part of Springbrook.

## CAR PARADE

The first ever School at Springbrook car parade was a truly memorable experience. The parade, which toured the campus and interacted with each home unit as it passed by, was an opportunity for teachers, therapists, and other non-essential staff to show the students and staff who work in The School at Springbrook that they are missed, appreciated, and valued.

The bond between a teacher and a student is a special one, and to say that the teachers were excited to see their students is a tremendous understatement.



## CELEBRATIONS

Alyssa Horton, Special Education Teacher at the Tom Golisano Center for Autism in The School at Springbrook, had this to say about the car parade: "We were all so excited to see the students. I was so happy to be able to participate, and it made me feel really good to see that everyone was doing well. Taping some balloons to my Jeep and driving around campus is such a simple gesture, but it brought so much joy to the students. I am so excited to get back to work with my students!"

The parade began in front of the Family Engagement Center and followed a route that allowed each home unit to enjoy the entirety of the procession. With over 20 decorated vehicles honking their horns, streamers and balloons blowing in the wind, and simple yet poignant messages such as "We Miss You!" written across countless vehicle windows, the parade was a wonderful testament to how much the people of Springbrook care for each other.

### A NEW APPROACH TO FAMILIAR THINGS

Like many other schools, Prom is one of the most highly anticipated events of the year at The School at Springbrook, but for obvious reasons having the dance in our gymnasium was not an option this year.

True to form, we adapted to our situation and decided that Prom 2020 would be an all-day event filled with good food, beautiful weather, and great company. Students and staff decorated the homes, dressed for the occasion, and danced all day to their favorite music. While a social distancing prom was

definitely a first for everyone, it is safe to say that — based on the faces of the students — it was still super fun!

Unprecedented times such as these create unprecedented problems, which in turn typically require unconventional solutions. We take an enormous amount of pride in our ability as an organization to adapt to whatever comes our way, and figuring out a safe way to have Prom for the students of The School at Springbrook was a challenge we met head on.

In the same way that we sought to offer an alternative to a traditional Prom, so too did we ultimately offer a graduation ceremony via Zoom for parents, staff, and other participants to enjoy. This digital ceremony was the first of its kind, encompassing nearly all aspects of a formal graduation.

Each of the 11 graduates were separately filmed as they received their diploma while wearing their cap and gown. This footage — combined with personalized narration about each graduate — made for a beautiful presentation that will no doubt stand the test of time.

In the weeks prior to the digital ceremony, graduates were treated to a Car Parade in their honor. Staff, peers, and therapists gathered to show their support for each graduate as the parade made its way around the campus. We are incredibly thankful that we were able to recognize our graduates in this unique way, but we are absolutely looking forward to the time when we can celebrate these wonderful occasions in person.

As our situation continues to evolve with the ever-changing rules and regulations surrounding COVID-19, we are extremely thankful to the essential staff who remain committed to improving the quality of the lives of the people they serve. As New York State continues to open, we remain committed to our decision to roll back the safeguards we have implemented only when we determine that it is safe for us to do so. As annual events and celebrations get closer, we continue to make choices based on the welfare of the people we serve.

This time last year we would be gathered to celebrate our Milestone Employees. Since we cannot recognize these dedicated, hard-working staff in person, please make sure to follow us on social media so that each person can be recognized for their outstanding work.

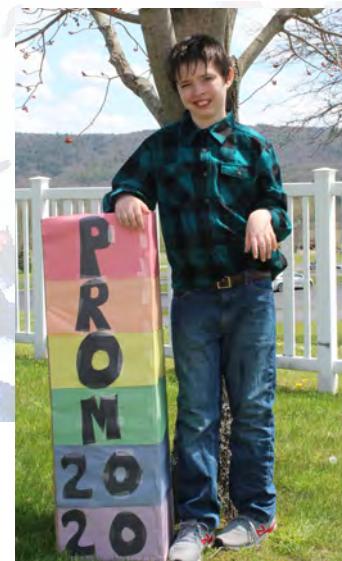
We look forward to the time when we can safely gather together to celebrate, but until that time we will continue to prioritize the health and safety of the people we support, the people we employ, and the community of which we are a part.



Above, left to right: Loretta Ulmer and Franklin dance at the Prom celebration; Loren Hoeppner and Jake hold balloons on Prom day; Brayden stands with a custom Prom decoration.



Above, top to bottom: Alyssa Horton, teacher in the Golisano Program, ties balloons to her vehicle in preparation for the parade; cars sit parked on standby adorned with colorful balloons and hand-painted messages.





# Springbrook Stories OF SUCCESS

Without question, this year brought with it unique challenges that we have all felt.

While social distancing has its difficulties for those we support, staff, and their families, everyone has adjusted to the new requirements which focus on prevention.

We want to take this opportunity to highlight a couple of people who have adapted to the change of routine quickly and have been exceptional role models for their peers. Kimberly Marra, a School at Springbrook student currently in the GEMS program from Snell House and Community Homes Resident Matthew Strauch both have embraced the changes in their routines and have thrived throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.



Kim with DSP Jeff Carreras, Prom 2020

**Kimberly** is a natural born leader. She is a gifted athlete and her sport of choice is basketball. Social distancing has put sports on hold, but Kimberly is always willing to try something new and has been participating in different workouts that are streamed on-line to stay active. Kimberly has a firm understanding of social distancing and pays close attention to changing rules and regulations. Since the start of COVID-19 distancing guidelines, Kimberly has taken extra precaution when talking to others, always ensuring that there is a good amount of space between each person. Kimberly also eagerly assists

staff when disinfecting the house each shift. She is a role model for her fellow students and an excellent example of adapting to change in routine and coming out on top. No matter what the reason, Kimberly will keep doing what she enjoys with a warm smile on her face, ready for whatever stands in her path.



**Matthew** is an energetic and extremely thoughtful young man. He sometimes finds it very difficult to adjust to changes in his everyday routine. Even small changes can present themselves to be a challenge for him. The changes that have occurred in the last few months due to COVID-19 have been significant, but Matthew has gracefully adjusted to each and every change that came his way. Staff at Cook Street have been thoroughly explaining the reasoning behind the change in routine. Matthew uses social stories to learn exactly what COVID-19 is and how to protect himself and loved ones from the virus. He has also been working very hard adjusting to wearing a mask to essential appointments to keep himself and others safe. Despite the changes in routine, Matthew loves to participate in craft activities and dance sessions. You'll find him spending a lot of his time outside going through the sprinkler or enjoying the bubble machine. He continues to adjust to the changing world around him. Recently, Matthew had scheduled visits from his parents which he was extremely excited for. His parents were a little hesitant

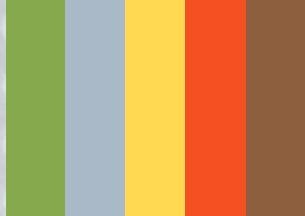
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•••

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[SpringbrookNY.org](http://SpringbrookNY.org)**

because of the change in visit location, but were confident Matthew would adjust, since he has been excelling with other routine changes. The visit was a success —Matthew adapted to the change and he and his family were so excited to see each other again.

These are just two examples of the ways residents and students have shined during this ever-changing time. While everyday life and routines have changed, Matthew and Kimberly made the most of the occasion and have become two of Springbrook's many inspirational success stories. Their accomplishments demonstrate that the entire Springbrook community will come together in times of uncertainty and change, and uncover some of the greatest personal success.



# SHARING Thankfulness

A community is what makes someone feel at home, and Springbrook is home to thousands of people — both within our walls and beyond. Our Springbrook community is one defined by strength, compassion, and loyalty. Each and every day, we all work to make the lives of those we serve full of joy, purpose, and hope. Thanks to our community of residents, students, staff, families, and friends, we are able to traverse this unsettling time with a sense of unity and optimism. No matter where each one of us is located, we are connected and differences are made in the lives of those we serve. We are grateful for our community, for the steady support of Springbrook, and for everyone that believes in and makes our mission possible.



*Top: Johnston Circle staff members Daren Lent, Raven Severino, and Ralph Gschwind display the appreciation gifts given by local vendors. Above: A poster made by residents thanking essential staff hangs proudly for all to see.*

"I am thankful to work for an agency that took quick action and focused on the health and safety of the individuals we serve, front line staff, and all the other members of the Springbrook organization. Measures have been consistently taken to maintain morale and continue to ensure the quality of care we provide to the individuals whom we support daily."

*Gordon Mumbulo, Assistant Director, Community Homes: Otsego Region*



In this unprecedented time of a global health pandemic, everyone has faced serious challenges. Knowing that our nephew is in the care of the amazing people at Springbrook makes it bearable and inspiring. For the Springbrook staff to continue to do what they do so well against the backdrop of this crisis speaks volumes as to their commitment and character. It also shows that their jobs are much more than occupations. The genuine way the staff allows a resident like our nephew to become part of their lives is humbling, and we recognize and appreciate what they do immeasurably."

*David & Kate Kruk,  
Aunt and Uncle of Braden Kruk*



"I am in awe of what Springbrook has accomplished over these last months. Everyone has pulled together and we are doing incredible things. The support that is being done by all to ensure the safety and well-being of the individuals we serve and for all Springbrook staff is mind blowing. We truly are a team!"

*Kim MacPherson, Assistant Director of the GEMS program at The School at Springbrook*

"We are currently living in a very uncertain world and through very turbulent times. With that said, there is one thing that is not uncertain and that is the commitment, dedication, and professionalism of everyone at Springbrook. We are grateful each and every day to the staff at Springbrook who make sure that our son and his friends are cared for, loved, entertained, engaged and well taken care of. You are our true heroes through this all and there is nothing that we could possibly say or do that would be adequate. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!"

*Michael and Michelle Steinhart,  
Parents of Avi Steinhart*





# DONOR DOLLARS *at Work*

The generosity of those who give to Springbrook is always inspiring, and this has been especially true during this time of uncertainty and change. With the help of our remarkable donors, we have faced the current health crisis with confidence and calmness.

The safety and well-being of those we serve is our top priority, and while this has remained at the forefront of our work over these last months, we have also been able to offer engaging experiences and opportunities to Springbrook students, residents, and staff thanks to the support of our generous donors. With their help, here are some of the programs we were able to carry out.

## TASTE OF THE TOWN

Thanks to generous donations, this important program continues to bring smiles and tasty treats from local restaurants to our community and campus homes each weekend. Because Springbrook is a part of numerous communities, this initiative is significant for both residents and local businesses.

## THE WEEKEND CHALLENGE AND PRIZES

Money raised has afforded students and residents the opportunity to compete in safe, creative, healthy, and engaging weekend activities through the ongoing Weekend Challenge initiative. What's more, winners are able to select a prize for their whole house to enjoy together.



Residents of Pierstown dress up for the Fourth of July Weekend Challenge.

## FAMILY VISITS

From the rentals of the tents where the outdoor family visits occur, to the activities and decorations that make these visits as comfortable and special as possible, donor dollars have provided the opportunity for families to come together — one of the greatest gifts anyone can give.



A visitation tent set up outside of The School at Springbrook; below, a check-in station set up outside of the White Building to safely screen visitors.



Students Ava (above), Narendra, and Kim (below) enjoy a treat from locally-owned Pondo's Pizzeria as part of the "Taste of the Town" program.



The map above shows the newly developed nature trails on our main campus.

## APPRECIATION STATIONS FOR ESSENTIAL STAFF

Donor gifts have allowed for Springbrook's essential workers to be recognized and celebrated during these challenging times. Appreciation Stations are now set up in each campus and community home, where each Monday the staff find a treat or small gift as a token of appreciation for their efforts.

## NATURE TRAIL

Gifts have supported the development of a nature trail on the Springbrook Main Campus that will benefit Springbrook students and residents and offer the chance to spend time in and explore the great outdoors.



*Workers install the new rubber mat swingset at the Kids Unlimited Preschool at Springbrook's Oneonta Campus.*



## A MORE INCLUSIVE PRESCHOOL PLAYGROUND

Generous gifts have allowed us to expand the Kids Unlimited Preschool playground with a rubber mat swing set. This addition will give students the ability to enjoy an outdoor activity with added safety, rather than a potentially dangerous woodchip alternative.

Donor Dollars have also supported:

## MODIFICATIONS TO COMMUNITY AND CAMPUS HOMES

COVID-related fundraising has provided Springbrook with the resources to modify aspects of certain homes and buildings and furnish them with the necessary supplies so these locations may provide quarantine housing for any individuals (staff or resident) thought to/confirmed to have COVID-19.



## MASK DONATIONS

Donations have allowed for the purchase of masks and other PPE, and thousands of fabric masks have been created and donated to Springbrook, as have hundreds of bottles of hand sanitizer and face shields.

## FLEXIBLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

As Springbrook continues to deliver educational services to students at The School of Springbrook, monetary support has provided materials that allow for flexible learning environments, such as outdoor tents, affording students the opportunities to be with their teachers and peers, though at a safe distance.

# HOW CAN *you* SUPPORT SPRINGBROOK?

There are numerous ways to help!



A gift from your donor-advised fund (DAF). A DAF is a philanthropic giving vehicle that provides an immediate tax benefit to you, and allows you to grant funds to charities of your choice. You can make a gift from your DAF to Springbrook by contacting your financial institution or foundation. Please ask for your name and address to be included so we can thank you!



Text SPRINGBROOK to 243-725 to make a donation.



Scan this QR code with your phone to go directly to our giving page.

Visit our website at [www.SpringbrookNY.org](http://www.SpringbrookNY.org) and click "Your Gift Matters" at the upper right.



A gift through your will or estate, and other planned giving opportunities.

Visit our website at [SpringbrookNY.org/Planned-Giving](http://SpringbrookNY.org/Planned-Giving) for more information.

Drop us a line!  
Mail your donation to  
Springbrook at:  
105 Campus Drive  
Oneonta, NY 13820



Call us at 607-286-7171, x271 and we'll be happy to assist you!



# CORNERSTONES *of Our Community*

## **DR. AND MRS. FRANCK: A PARTNERSHIP DECADES IN THE MAKING**

Longtime residents of Cooperstown, NY, Walt and Linda Franck have been a part of the Springbrook community for nearly 20 years. Walt, a retired physician, and Linda, a retired nurse, are not only generous with their donations to Springbrook, but also with the time they have shared with our organization. Springbrook's work has always been important to the Francks; their daughter was born with a hearing impairment, and so Springbrook's mission to support and better the lives of those with disabilities consistently resonated with them.

In 2004, Linda joined Springbrook's Board of Trustees, and during her time on the board, Springbrook experienced significant growth, as she notes, "it was just one thing after another that was being done and created." During this time of expansion, Linda was a member of the Fundraising Committee, and admits it was not her favorite role, saying, "I think I decided I found it easier to give than to ask." However, she recalls the board meetings with fondness and shares, "Patricia Kennedy is one amazing lady who had incredible dreams, and the board was able to help see them through."

As Springbrook grew, so did Linda's admiration for the organization and all that it was able to do for those it served. Though Linda left the board in 2010, she joined Springbrook's



*Dr. and Mrs. Franck*

Human Rights Committee just a short while later, which reviews behavioral restrictions for Springbrook students and residents. Any rights restriction must come through the committee first, where it is either approved or rejected. During such deliberations, Linda's background in nursing was extremely valuable, as the review of medications, possible interactions, and knowledge of health conditions were often part of these meetings. During her time on the committee, Linda was consistently impressed by the staff at Springbrook and the work they did with the individuals whom they supported. "People there give it their all," she remarks.

Linda has since left the Human Rights Committee but continues to stay connected to Springbrook and gives generously to the

organization's work, noting, "When we first moved to the area in the 1970s, Springbrook was still The Upstate Home for Children — just one building — and it has been incredible to watch it go from that one house to what it is now. It is such an inspiring place that helps so many people."

Thanks to individuals like Linda, who has given so much of her talent, insight, and time to Springbrook, as well as the generosity of both Linda and Walt, Springbrook will continue to meet and serve the needs of countless individuals, long into the future.



*Sol Greenbaum with his wife, Evelyn.*

## **A LASTING LEGACY: SOL GREENBAUM**

Springbrook has recently lost an irreplaceable friend and supporter, but his incredible life is one that can inspire us all. Sol Greenbaum, who passed away at the age of 95 in June of this year, was a true believer in Springbrook's mission. His grandson, Sam, whom he adored, is a resident of Springbrook, and Sol was a frequent visitor to Springbrook when he would come to spend time together with Sam. His connection to the organization strengthened over the years, and while he was extremely generous with his own giving to Springbrook, he also encouraged numerous friends and colleagues to connect with the organization.

"Sol and Sam had a special bond," notes Sol's daughter and Sam's mother, Bonnie Martin. "He knew that he could help his beloved grandson by helping Springbrook. As time went on, Sol became a passionate advocate for Springbrook, giving generously of his time and resources, introducing family and business associates to Springbrook's work, and encouraging their giving."



*Sol's grandson, Sam, smiles during a summer convertible ride.*

Bonnie shared that Sol and her mother, Alma, were always there for Sam and their entire family, and lived lives full of the values they instilled in her, where family comes first, you love unconditionally, put time into what matters, and are generous, kind, and giving. She also notes that her stepmother and Sol's widow, Evelyn, shared his passion for giving to Springbrook. Evelyn echoes Bonnie when she reflects on Sol's dedication to the people and causes he loved in life. "Sol was lovely and loyal in every way," shares Evelyn. "He cared deeply about Sam and had peace of mind knowing he was cared for and safe at Springbrook."

After Sol passed away, Bonnie had no doubt about what he would want done in his memory: have those who wished to honor him make contributions to Springbrook. As Bonnie shared, "When you earned Sol's love or friendship, it was for a lifetime. He and Springbrook had a lot in common that way. Ensuring that Springbrook can honor its commitment to those it supports and serves — for a lifetime, is the perfect way to honor my wonderful father's legacy."



**MILESTONE**  
SPRINGBROOK EMPLOYEE

# Thank you FOR YOUR DEDICATED SERVICE

At Springbrook, we take pride in our staff and we make sure to take time for recognition of our Milestone employees. Congratulations to all of the Springbrook Milestones celebrating 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 year anniversaries; we thank you so much for your years of service and dedication to those we support. To read a snapshot biography of these amazing staff members, visit: [SpringbrookNY.org/milestones](http://SpringbrookNY.org/milestones).



Steve Benavides, Residence Counselor, Ford Community Home

*25 Years*

Larry Clum, Custodian & Maintenance Education



Terri Wells, Administrative Assistant, Maintenance Dept.

*20 Years*



*Left to right:*

Maral Burke, Residence Counselor, Otego Community Home

Frank Fisher, Maintenance Supervisor

Lydia Garlick, Teaching Assistant, Kids Unlimited Preschool

# 20 Years



Left: Traci Lanner, Director of The School at Springbrook  
Right: Kathleen Murphy, Day Habilitation Assistant, Capstone Oneonta

Not pictured: Kelly Bennet, On-Campus LPN;  
Robert Harshbarger Jr., Residence Counselor, Sherburne Community Home;  
Christopher Watson, Assistant Manager, Sunshine House.

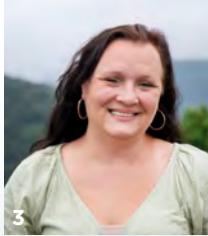


# 15 Years

Top left, clockwise:

Sarah Lohr, Assistant Director of Community Homes;  
Michele Mohrien, Residential Manager, Otego Community  
Home; Kimberly Pearce-Schwend, Care Coordination Manager,  
Oneonta; Elizabeth Tompkins, Accountant

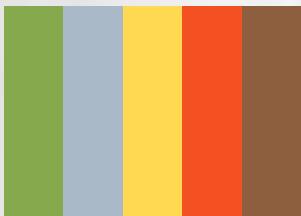
Not pictured: Michael Campen, HCBS Aide; Tara Mosher-Campoli,  
Residence Counselor, Milford Community Home; David Pick, Physical  
Therapist Assistant, Capstone Oneonta; Kimberly Vass, Assistant  
Manager, Highland House



# 10 Years

1. Andrea Aikens, Residence Counselor, Hayes Street Community Home
2. Alex Baah, Teaching Assistant, Scriven House
3. Shannon Carreras, Special Education Teacher, GEMS School
4. Michele Cleveland, Day Hab Coordinator, Capstone Oneonta
5. Keith DeVost, Carpenter, Community Homes Maintenance
6. Jennifer Grace, Day Hab Assistant, Capstone Oneonta
7. Seth Haight, Chief Coordinating Officer
8. Michelle Myers, Clinical Coordinator, Golisano School
9. George Ruland, Maintenance Supervisor, Community Homes
10. Crystal-Nicole Skuderin, Classroom Aide, GEMS School
11. Jody Sperbek, Day Hab Assistant, Capstone Oneonta
12. Lindsey Symonds, Assistant Director, Community Services
13. Renee Vilbrin, Special Education Teacher, Golisano School

Not pictured: Judy Bice, Residence Counselor, Grandview Community Home; Mary Lussier, DSP Reserve, West Oneonta Community Home; Stephen Maricle, Residence Counselor, Morris Community Home; Miguel Martinez, Residence Counselor, Taylor House; Ann Myers, HCBS Aide; Jessica Rogers, Residential Manager, Grandview Community Home; Candice Seeley, Residence Counselor, Susquehanna House; Erika Tyler-Behr, HCBS Aide



## GOOD NEWS ROUNDUP



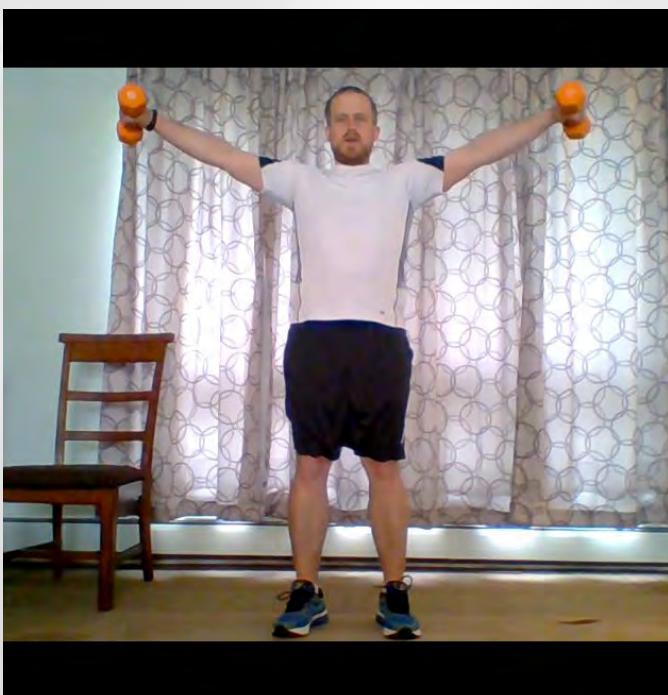
### REMARKABLE GENEROSITY

The decision to cancel our 2020 Gala was a difficult one to make, but if we could turn back time, we would make the same decision again. We appreciate all of the individuals and businesses who honored their sponsorship to this event, and we are looking forward to the time when we can all get together again.



### REUNITED (AND IT FEELS SO GOOD!)

After more than three months of no family visits, we were beyond thrilled when we received word from OPWDD that we could allow parents to visit their loved ones. We sincerely thank the families, friends, and advocates of the people we serve for their cooperation and understanding during these unprecedented times.



### SPRINGBROOK STRONG!

Jonathan Philby, Adaptive Physical Education Teacher in The School at Springbrook, recorded 10 different workouts for residents and staff to use to keep their bodies Springbrook Strong. Thanks, Jon!

## COOKING WITH ALYSSA

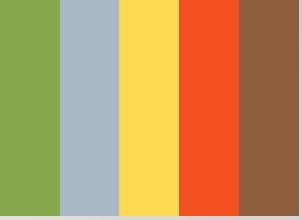
Alyssa Hall, Speech Pathologist for The School at Springbrook, is known throughout the organization for her incredible enthusiasm. For 12 consecutive weeks, Alyssa recorded a cooking show for home units to stream and follow! Each episode featured a different delicacy, and a different costume to match each dish.



## OTHER DUTIES AS ASSIGNED

Will Hiskey, a 16-year member of the Facilities Department, has assumed the role of personal grocery shopper for many of our on campus residences. When asked about his newfound responsibility, Will said, "I am happy to do this for the kids and for the staff. I get the groceries and drop them off at the houses. The houses sanitize the groceries before they go inside. It keeps them from having to go to the store, and I like helping out." Thanks, Will!





## GOOD NEWS ROUNDUP

"The Community Homes staffing teams have handled themselves like the true rock stars they are during this challenging time! Without their knowledge, skills, communication and implementation of systems to keep everyone safe we wouldn't be where we are today. Their actions show how much they truly care for the people they support and for that I greatly thank them."

- Nicole Cashman,  
Director of the Community Homes Program

"I want to recognize the staff at Kids Unlimited Preschool who provided day care to children of essential workers throughout the pandemic and have now shifted gears to summer school. Great job!"

- Traci Lanner,  
Director of the School at Springbrook



"I would like to thank every member of the facilities team for your perseverance, your sacrifices, your ethics, your dedication, and your incredible work. Thank you for accepting new challenges without hesitation, and for providing essential support for the people of Springbrook."

- Kevin Morris,  
Director of Facilities

### FROM THE HEART

We have overcome so much over the past six months. Here are some special shoutouts from team members to team members.

"I want to thank all of the staff who helped with the filming of the graduation video. This was a very important, very big project and I truly appreciate all of the positivity, flexibility, and enthusiasm that each person demonstrated. Thank you!"

- Luke Moran,  
Springbrook Photographer





## BEHIND THE SCENES

It's no secret that the dietary staff at Springbrook are among the hardest working in the organization, and with meals for all of our residential homes — both on and off campus — being prepared in the kitchen of The School at Springbrook, the team met the challenge head-on. We are proud of our essential workers, and we are thankful for the hard work (and delicious food!) of our dietary staff.

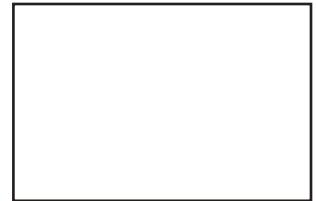
## REMOTE TEACHING, REMOTE LEARNING

We want to give a shout out to our teachers, teaching assistants, direct support staff, and therapists for the hard work we know it took to adapt to remote teaching. You have demonstrated an incredible commitment to the students you support and we are so thankful for your efforts!





105 Campus Drive  
Oneonta, NY 13820  
[SpringbrookNY.org](http://SpringbrookNY.org)



MAKING THE DIFFERENCE FOR PEOPLE WITH  
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES **FOR A LIFETIME**



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