



Inspirations

A JOURNEY ONLY *Beginning*



WINTER 2023 EDITION



INSPIRATIONS MAGAZINE
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in Oneonta, NY.

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Cover: Students, families, staff, donors, and members
of the board gather together to celebrate the 10th
anniversary of the Tom Golisano Center for Autism.

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.



A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



A Journey Only Beginning...this issue of the *Inspirations* magazine is a chronicle of the lives of children, adults, family members, and staff at Springbrook. We capture each of them at the start of their journey in life, at some pivotal point of attainment, or at a crossroads where decisions have to be made.

Of course, all of us, well maybe not all of us, hear journey and think of a trip or destination, but I cannot get that 70's rock band out of my mind. For those who do not know Journey, one of their hit songs was "Don't Stop Believing." While the lyrics are not indicative of our *Inspirations* magazine, the song title means everything to us at Springbrook.

I always read the *Inspirations* magazine a few times before I write my message, because I want to feel the stories, embrace and remember the challenges, and reflect on the work still to be done. Throughout this issue that dang Journey song kept coming back to haunt me and the staff close enough to hear me. Don't stop believing...we do not, and I am so glad that we do not

stop believing in our staff, the people we are privileged to support, and their families.

We, at Springbrook, are at a crossroads. We have weathered a pandemic, celebrated the 10th anniversary of the School at Springbrook and the Golisano program, and we have expanded our services throughout the region to support people in our homes and their homes. We also reached funding goals thanks to new and long-time generous donors. Our staff and donors demonstrate what can be done when one is invested in the lives of others... When we keep believing!

Now, we continue our journey to support and expand the workforce by growing our Springbrook Scholars program. Our staff has continued to go above and beyond everyday challenges to provide services to the people we support. Finally, the compassion of our board members and donors only grows exponentially each day—their commitment to the community is seen through their work and leadership. Please, share these journeys with your friends and family. But most of all, don't stop believing in Springbrook!

Patricia E. Kennedy

Patricia E. Kennedy
CEO





CELEBRATE!

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TOM GOLISANO CENTER FOR AUTISM





CELEBRATION CONT.

Celebrate John!

Today, John Martin is happy and healthy. From Cairo, New York, John arrived at The Tom Golisano Center for Autism at Springbrook in 2017. While living at home, John ate only pancakes and Swedish fish and liked to avoid getting his hair cut.

After a few months at the Golisano Center, however, John began to acquire skills quickly and learn to enjoy new foods and experiences. This is in part due to the response of his teacher, Alyssa Horton, who knew that John's first few years in the classroom would be fundamental. Alyssa and a team of staff worked with John daily to provide consistent motivation and remain dedicated to helping him achieve his goals. Through hard work, John has become more adaptable to change and now communicates his needs more effectively through sign language. He also gets his hair cut regularly.

For Alyssa, working with John has been a rewarding experience and she hopes to continue helping students who come her way to reach their goals. Alyssa earned her Master of Science in Education, Special Education with a focus on childhood through the Springbrook Scholars program. She became a Special Education teacher at Springbrook, and soon after a lead teacher, in 2019. Now, she is working on obtaining a post-masters advanced certificate for education leadership at Stony Brook University. These qualifications are one way for Alyssa to engage in learning outside of the classroom, but an even greater way for her to bring what she has learned back into a Springbrook classroom. For students like John, this means having a teacher who can provide guidance and practice the best care for their needs to get them to a place of independence and personal success.

Celebrate Phoenix!

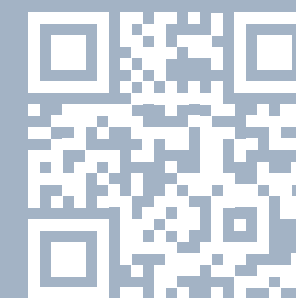
Phoenix Benavides, a local of Oneonta, came to Springbrook as a student of the GEMS program and soon moved to The Tom Golisano Center for Autism, where he quickly benefited from the program. Before joining the Golisano program, Phoenix had difficulty learning new skills and moving around his community. With the help of staff, a plan was developed to help Phoenix to become more independent, which included long-term goals like learning everyday life and vocational skills.

Phoenix has been working with his teacher, Alyssa Horton, and BCBA Enrique Carrasco to prepare him for life beyond graduation from the School. Phoenix hopes to work for a local grocer, but before he can do that, he is working to understand the world around him, including his relationships with staff, peers, and the larger school environment. In his time at the Golisano Center, Phoenix has developed stellar communication skills by learning sign language, at which he has excelled. Today, Phoenix uses sign language to ask for the things he needs and wants and now understands more signs than his teacher and staff.

Most notable, however, are his abilities as an artist. One can find his chalk drawings around the Main Campus, including the sidewalks of his on-campus home. Before Phoenix learned to contain his love for drawing and colors, he went beyond the boundaries of a coloring book and would draw on any surface. Phoenix has learned to maintain boundaries and to stay organized, two of his goals completed.

Today, Phoenix uses sign to ask for the things that he needs and wants and now understands more signs than his teacher and other staff members.

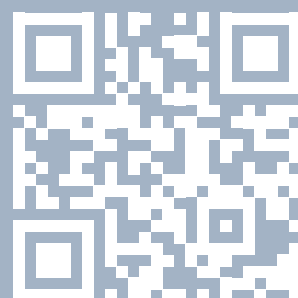
Scan the QR Code to learn more about Phoenix!



"I've never seen a student make more monumental progress than John has. He is a completely different young man than he was when I met him 5 years ago."

— Alyssa Horton, Special Education Teacher

Scan the QR Code to learn more about John!



CELEBRATION CONT.

Celebrate Anas!

Anas loves music. He came to the Tom Golisano Center for Autism in November 2012 and graduated in June 2022. Within those ten years, Anas became more self-aware and discovered music. He also improved his focus and learned how to become a better communicator. Now an adult, Anas is looking for a home where he can continue to use the skills he has acquired and spend time listening to his favorite tunes on his iPad.

Celebrate Hamsuel!

Hamsuel Perez and his family moved to New York from the Dominican Republic; his family resides in Queens Village, New York, and visits Hamsuel often. Hamsuel came to the Tom Golisano Center for Autism in May 2013 and graduated in June 2022. With the help of staff and his classroom teacher, James Leech, Hamsuel's social skills and self-awareness improved early into the program. Hamsuel joined the sports programs at Springbrook; he played basketball and soccer with the Springbrook Scorpions teams and participated in the Special Olympics. His social side also flourished. He "thrives on social grounds," said James Leech, his teacher. Hamsuel especially enjoys socializing when he has the opportunity to get out to the parks to play basketball or enjoy the trails. James continued, "Hamsuel always wants to have a good time and make you smile."

"Hamsuel always wants to have a good time and make you smile."

— James

Celebrate Walker!

Walker Lawrence came to the Golisano Center for Autism in 2017. Local to Harpursville, Walker intends to move back home after graduation. To prepare him for life at home, BCBA Enrique Carrasco and his teacher have worked with Walker to build his social and vocational skills. Walker currently volunteers at the Susquehanna Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), where he has volunteered since 2021. Walker's mom hopes to open a kennel where Walker can work to take care of dogs and cats. At Susquehanna, Walker cleans the facility and socializes with the animals. The opportunity to volunteer at the Susquehanna SPCA has been great for Walker and for the animals with whom he interacts. In addition, Walker has benefitted from working with Enrique, who focused on a family-oriented approach. Walker's family looks forward to having him at home and working together in the near future.

Celebrate Shelby!

Shelby Stoecklin joined the Golisano program in December 2018. Shelby is from Apalachin, NY. Working with special education teacher Alyssa Horton and BCBA Michelle Myers, Shelby has progressed academically, including following instructions and participating in group activities. The next steps for Shelby include improving the length of time she can focus on a task, completing tasks independently, and engaging in various leisure activities on her own.





A Journey GUIDED BY Gratitude

By Desiree Simpson

A journey can be described as a trip that takes place over a long time. For Bill and Rhonda Goodrich, their journey in generosity and support of the mission and vision of Springbrook started over ten years ago. At that time, Bill was introduced to Springbrook when LeChase, the construction company of which Bill is president and CEO, completed the construction of the school's gym, cafeteria, and other areas on Springbrook's Main Campus. He was also present ten years later to mark the celebration of the Tom Golisano Center for Autism. Today, Bill and Rhonda Goodrich remain committed to making a difference in the Springbrook community and beyond.

Despite a late-autumn chill in the air on a sunny day in October, there was an all-encompassing feeling of joy at the 10th-anniversary festivities held in honor of the Tom Golisano Center for Autism at the School at Springbrook. The event brought together students and their direct support providers and teachers, TAs and BCBA's; parents and siblings; Springbrook staff

from management to maintenance; and donors and partners in the 10-year and lifelong journeys. The event was "inspiring," says Bill, and reinforced in him all the reasons he supports the organization. Across the afternoon, we shared stories of students whose lives have been drastically transformed for the better, thanks to the services Springbrook can offer. Students like Phoenix and John, who have become more mindful and independent than before, received the support they needed here. Families shared their stories as well — stories of compassion and resilience that moved the crowd, especially Bill.

For Bill, it is essential to engage with the community at Springbrook and to see first-hand the level of involvement and support that the Springbrook community provides for one another. And to experience the campus once again to see how well the buildings have been maintained and how they have been utilized by students, their families, and staff on campus. "The campus is just as beautiful ten years later. Seeing the care and attention to the campus and its environment was uplifting," Bill shared. With that said, the generosity of Bill and Rhonda Goodrich goes beyond the events of a single day and all the construction of the main campus. Their giving supports the people and places where it can have the most significant impact. This impact, says Bill, is in "creating an environment that best supports children and their families, and the community in which they live. It's about creating connections." As a result, the Springbrook community of teachers, behavior specialists, and staff make everyday decisions and actions based on fostering these connections and coming together to actively promote the well-being of children on their journey to adulthood.

Thank you, Bill and Rhonda Goodrich, for your generosity and continued dedication to the Springbrook mission and for helping us fulfill our vision now and into the future.



“For Rhonda and I, having a direct connection rekindled through sharing stories and celebrating everyday accomplishments brought our connection with Springbrook to a whole other level.”

– Bill Goodrich



Bill Goodrich with respected Board Members and Springbrook Staff.

To donate scan the
QRCode or visit
[springbrookny.org/
ways-to-give](https://springbrookny.org/ways-to-give)



Making THE MOVE



Brandy showing off her beautiful artwork.

Brandy shared that her favorite memory from the last year was when she got the news that her efforts had paid off and she was going to be moving to Pierstown! She has a lot of gratitude for the help she got from Springbrook staff, and is thankful for the resources that are now available to her since the expansion of the Sidney Plains region.

By Lila Ingersoll

Brandy Parker lived at Parkview community home for 16 years, but recently, she decided it was time to embark on a new journey.

When Brandy made her decision to move to Pierstown community home, there was nothing that could stand in her way. She knew that new experiences awaited her and was eager to pursue them. Brandy spoke with Gordon Mumbulo, assistant director of Community Homes, and Stephanie Davy, director of Community Homes at Springbrook. She confidently explained that she wanted to move, and with the help of Gordon, Stephanie, and other Springbrook staff, it became a reality. After 16 years in the same home, Brandy wanted to explore beyond what she knew and was looking for new activities to try and more people to meet.

Besides her big move, Brandy pursued art more seriously. She also fulfilled a dream to become a full-time pet owner. Brandy now has a 6-month-old bearded dragon named Bella, who she frequently draws portraits of in her sketchbook. She also enjoys drawing portraits of people. The new friends that she

has made at Pierstown are a source of daily inspiration for her. Brandy learned a lot about drawing and art at Parkview, where her friend Pepper, another talented artist, gave her tips and tricks to improve her skills.

Moving forward, Brandy is excited to spend more time with her housemates at Pierstown, and is already preparing fun-filled plans. At the end of February, Brandy will go to her cousin's wedding in Florida, and she is very happy to reunite with some of her family. More movie nights at Pierstown are also on the horizon, with a plan for a special sleepover-themed movie night with popcorn and a cozy setup in the living room.

The past year has been all about embracing the new for Brandy, and she has approached the many changes with excitement and an open mind. We enjoyed learning more about Brandy on our visit to Pierstown and wish her all the best in her new home!



Brandy with her housemate and friend, Michele.



Brandy's 6-month old bearded dragon named Bella.



CHRIS MORGAN

Thriving THROUGH Opportunity



By Lila Ingersoll

For many people, being part of a community can bring fulfillment, connection, and enjoyment into their lives. However, sometimes it is hard to know where to start when trying to get involved. Eight years ago, when Chris Morgan and his family moved from Jamestown to Apalachin, New York, they faced this very problem – where to find the opportunity to get Chris involved in his community. It was in Apalachin that Chris was connected with Self-Directed Services through Springbrook, and where a new life was set in motion for Chris.

Chris can tell you first-hand that the opportunity to be part of a community has changed his life. Through the help of Springbrook's SDS coordinator Meg Giris, Chris has pursued volunteer opportunities and jobs that connect him with his interests and the community. Chris now has a flourishing social life, with several close mentors introduced into his life through SDS, including Tim Loso, Andy Thompson, and Mike Mailen. Chris is one of the friendliest people you will meet and strives to know everyone in his community, a goal he has nearly achieved, as he declares, "I could be the mayor of Apalachin!"

Chris flying his 1st-person drone.



At 38 years of age, Chris is living the life he always dreamed of – he has a job where he is appreciated, friends that he enjoys, and pastimes that bring him pleasure in his leisure time. Chris's biggest advocate since his move to Apalachin has been his sister, Michelle Mones. Michelle has made it a goal to get Chris involved in the community and has always wanted to give him a chance to grow and succeed. With Michelle, SDS, and his mentors by his side, Chris has truly thrived.

The community of Apalachin has also benefitted greatly, as Chris has volunteered at community kitchens, gardens, and his local church. He has also generously offered to help people with various tasks like lawn mowing, snow removal, dog walking, and more. People know that Chris is reliable and love that he does everything with a smile.

The work that Chris does for his community has not gone without recognition. Through his job as a cleaner at the day hab facility Human Technology Corporation, Chris earned the William B. Joslin Outstanding Performance Award. He is a star

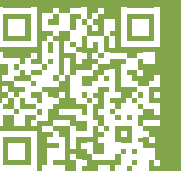
employee there and was able to have family and friends come to celebrate him for his achievements through the award, as well as being granted a monetary scholarship and a write-up in a local magazine! His sister, Michelle, said, "it was nice for him to get that recognition and praise from the community." Since being introduced to Springbrook SDS, Chris has achieved so much, and he says that his goal for the future is to "enjoy life and be himself."

Although Chris spends a lot of his time working and volunteering, he also enjoys pursuing his hobbies in his leisure time. Chris enjoys flying 1st-person drones, hiking, swimming, and fishing. Overall, Chris loves to be active, and SDS and his mentors have done a wonderful job of getting Chris connected so that he can participate in so many amazing new activities!

Michelle says that Chris's success and happiness are "a testimony to getting help, getting connected with the right resources, and thriving." The last eight years have been an amazing experience for Chris, and we hope he will continue to enjoy life and be himself!



Chris pictured with his mentor Timothy Loso.



To learn more about
Self Direction
scan the QRCode or visit
springbrookny.org/sds



Overcoming THE DISTANCE

By Lila Ingersoll

Embarking on a new journey or facing a major transition in life is never easy. However, it can invite growth and opportunity that may have never been possible or imaginable.

For Dean Solomon and Rebecca Blake, the choice to enroll their twins, Jacob and Shirah, in a residential school program was the start of a new journey, and it was not an easy choice to make. They were faced with what they thought would be an “insurmountable distance” between their home in Westchester and The School at Springbrook residential campus in Oneonta. However, once they had the opportunity to visit Springbrook, they were immediately struck by the welcoming and homey atmosphere, which quickly overcame their concerns about distance.

Although it was a “gut-wrenching” move to make for Dean and Rebecca, and very hard to leave Jacob and Shirah, they have found abundant reassurance in the true happiness their children have experienced at Springbrook. Rebecca described the transition to Springbrook as “seamless” and is overjoyed that on visits to Springbrook, Jacob and Shirah are “delighted



Patricia Kennedy, CEO, and Bill Mirabito, board member, greet Jacob during a luncheon at the Family Engagement Center.

If you would like to donate and support families visiting the Family Engagement Center, please scan the QR code.



“The staff have gone above and beyond to look out for the twins’ needs and best interests.”

Dean and Rebecca

to see us, and equally delighted to be wheeled back to their house.”

Rebecca and Dean are impressed with the quality of care that Jacob and Shirah have received, but also the “compassion and love” that the staff at Springbrook have for their kids. It is clear that the twins truly feel that they are living their best lives. Dean shared that after their first night at Springbrook, he came to visit the twins and took them for a walk around the main campus. The twins thought that he was taking them away, and became upset because they did not want to leave after spending their first night in the house! Dean was extremely happy to know that his children were already loving their home at Springbrook.

Jacob and Shirah have especially loved participating in swim therapy at Springbrook, and enjoy music, anything with lights and buttons. Since coming to Springbrook, the twins have had many successes. On a recent trip to Brooks’ House of Bar-B-Q in Oneonta, Shirah began to imitate the word “maple” as they shared maple candies, which Dean shares was an amazing success as the twins do not use words to communicate. Jacob has also started to try to self-propel himself in his wheelchair, which he has never attempted before! These are amazing accomplishments for the twins.

Dean and Rebecca are consistently impressed by the

staff working with Jacob and Shirah. They expressed that the staff has gone above and beyond to look out for the twins’ needs and best interests, whether it is something as small as buying them a pair of warm winter boots or making them amazing Halloween costumes (see photos).

Thanks to Springbrook staff, facilities, and our generous donors, Rebecca and Dean have found a home away from home at the Family Engagement Center on Main Campus. They are able to enjoy all of the wonderful amenities during their stay, and spend time in “a warm and welcoming place while remaining close to Jacob and Shirah.”

At Springbrook, Dean and Rebecca explore new possibilities for Jacob and Shirah, and journeys to embark on, like an upcoming trip in January to Disney World in Orlando! This is a trip that was not feasible for their family before coming to Springbrook, and they were able to make it happen with help and support from staff.

Moving forward, Dean and Rebecca are already dreaming up more exciting plans for their kids, such as visiting Lego Land in New York. They now are able to explore many new possibilities for activities to share with Jacob and Shirah, and view Springbrook not just as home for their kids, but a second home for themselves.



JESSI LEVEILLE

A Teenage Dream COME TRUE



Jessi considers herself very lucky to have received support from Springbrook and the Spadaccia family to achieve her dream and encourages anyone at Springbrook who is thinking of pursuing further education to apply to one of the scholarship programs Springbrook offers.



To submit an application scan the QRCode or visit springbrookny.org/springbrook-scholars

By Lila Ingersoll

Journeys often require patience and determination, as you may begin without knowing how far away the destination is or the work it may require to get there.

Jessi LeVeille has faced every level of her educational and professional journey with an abundance of patience and determination. Jessi has dreamed of completing her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree since she was a teenager. She even remembers highlighting this goal in her high school yearbook. When Jessi received the Springbrook Scholars registered nurse (RN) to Bachelor's of Science in Nursing (BSN) scholarship, her long-awaited dream came full circle.

The Springbrook Scholar's RN to BSN program was made possible through a donation from the Spadaccia family. With the help of Bob Spadaccia and his daughter, Meredith, a nurse practitioner, this program was created to support Springbrook RNs as they obtain their Bachelor of Science in Nursing degrees from SUNY Delhi.

When asked about the RN to BSN program, Bob Spadaccia shared, "We have felt a connection to Oneonta since my time at Hartwick, and

we were looking for a way to give back. When Seth Haight proposed this idea to us, we knew it would be a great opportunity for Meredith and I to work together to make a difference in the community. The work that is done at Springbrook is so amazing and meaningful, and we are happy to support employees on their educational journeys."

Jessi's journey in nursing began when she was 16, starting out as a nurse's aide. This year will be her 21st year in nursing, and she has worked at every level of the nursing ladder since then, from a CNA to an LPN, RN, and finally now as a BSN. Jessi has grown from each experience throughout her career and understands how much hard work is required at all levels of care, making her more empathetic with her coworkers and those she cares for.

In November of 2022, Jessi began her newest journey as the assistant director of nursing for Springbrook's community homes. Jessi shared that earning her BSN has given her "a great foundation for her current position," and she adeptly tackles problem-solving, constantly striving to provide the best care for the people she works with.

Jessi has maintained the momentum of her career by creating new goals to achieve in her position, such as holding more nursing clinics and implementing a monthly discussion at the nursing meeting where she will introduce different diagnoses that pertain to people with developmental disabilities.



Thank you, SPADACCIA FAMILY!

DONOR DOLLARS *at Work*

The generosity of people who give to Springbrook is what empowers our organization to realize our vision of giving people the opportunity to live their life as they choose. With the help of our incredible donors, we continue to strive to be the most tried and true service provider in New York State for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Here is a small sample of projects that were made possible by the big hearts of our donors.

To make a gift, please visit springbrookny.org/give or text **SPRINGBROOK** to **243-725** today!

Namaste!

Springbrook's day habilitation participants love Casey Calvey's adapted yoga! Her guidance and inspiration help participants to become aware of their bodies and practice relaxation, stretching, balance, and focus. Activities are adapted in small group sessions so that everyone can benefit. We are grateful to the local foundations in Oneonta and Norwich, as well as individual donors who have supported these sessions for the past several years.

Beginning during the COVID pandemic, yoga sessions were held over zoom, with people joining in from multiple community homes at once. This format worked so well that Casey now provides classes remotely a few times each month, as well as in-person sessions at various Springbrook locations or Fortin Park.

Thanks to individual donors and local foundations for their support of special opportunities like yoga!



Advanced Learning Opportunities for All!

The classes of Ms. Smith and Ms. Orrell love reading time, the playground, arts & crafts, and puzzles! At Kids Unlimited Preschool, children of all abilities learn and play together with these activities and more. Each classroom is led by a pair of certified teachers (Early Childhood and Special Education), supported by attentive classroom aides. Each day is a blend of teacher-led activities and play that engages children's natural curiosity and encourages them to learn from each other and the world around them.

High-quality early childhood programs like Kids Unlimited are resource-intensive, but Springbrook is committed to providing this opportunity at a very affordable cost for local families. This is possible through donor support, including a multi-year grant from the **Robert & Esther Black Family Foundation**, and many other generous donors.



A Sunshade for the Sunshine!

Recess and Physical Education are some of The School at Springbrook students' favorite times of the school day, and we love to see everyone out and about on campus. Thanks to our generous donors, we've added a new element to our much-loved playground — a sunshade!

Achieving Goals and Learning New Skills

Walker, a student in Springbrook's Golisano Center for Autism, enjoys warming up for Adapted Phys Ed (APE) class on a rebounder, or one-person trampoline. Thanks to a grant from the **NYS Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (NYSAPERD)**, our students now have a new rebounder and balance training tools for APE class! These prepare students to work on their goals for strength, coordination, and sport-specific skills.



Resources Go Above and Beyond

Thank you to the **Anna L. Mabey Foundation of Norwich** for their longstanding generous support of Springbrook's programs and services! This year's grant was used to purchase equipment to promote physical fitness for residents of two community homes. The residents at Broad Street are enthusiastic about having their new exercise bike to use rain or shine. A new backyard swing for Grandview allows residents with mobility limitations to get out of their wheelchairs and enjoy time outside. These are examples of the type of "above and beyond" resources that have a positive impact on the quality of life of residents.



GOOD NEWS ROUNDUP



Dr. Alberto J. F. Cardelle



Mary Ann C. Kriza

Welcome Dr. Alberto J. F. Cardelle & Mary Ann C. Kriza

In December, the Board of Directors at Springbrook was joined by new members, Dr. Alberto J. F. Cardelle, current president of the State University of New York at Oneonta (SUNY Oneonta), and Mary Ann C. Kriza, an attorney based in Rochester, NY. Dr. Cardelle and Ms. Kriza have advocated for diversity and inclusion across disciplines throughout their respective careers. Thomas Maggs, president of the board of directors, said, “We are honored to add these esteemed colleagues to the board at this time of growth and expansion of possibilities for the people we support and our employees.”

Before becoming president at SUNY Oneonta, Dr. Cardelle was provost and vice president for academic affairs at Fitchburg State University (FSU). Cardelle started his career in academia at East Stroudsburg University (ESU), where he worked as an assistant professor of public health in 1999 and later became department chair in 2001. Over a 15-year career at ESU, he also served as vice-provost, dean of the Graduate College, and dean of the College of Health Sciences.

Dr. Cardelle’s background in public health policy and higher education will provide an opportunity

to “strengthen the health services offered to Springbrook and create strong training opportunities for Springbrook providers through higher education.” He looks forward to serving the Springbrook community and the region by helping leverage resources across the community.

Ms. Kriza offers her time and professional development as a practicing attorney in New York state and as a long-time professional in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Before law school, she worked in higher education for ten years. Kriza holds a Bachelor’s Degree in English Language and Literature from Smith College, a Master’s Degree in Public Administration from Cornell University, and a Juris Doctorate from Albany Law School. Kriza has supported efforts to create more diverse environments as an active member of several committees, including her role as chair of the Diversity Committee at Cornell. At this time, she sits on the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission, which is devoted to expanding diversity in the court system of New York State.

Kriza had this to say about her first impressions on a visit to Springbrook: “When I visited Springbrook, I was very impressed by the level of care, engagement, and thoughtfulness of how people think and work.” She looks forward to using her experience of working in higher education and law to collaborate with the board on future projects and using her background to expand diversity and inclusion in the community.

Members of the Springbrook board are engaged across disciplines and work toward a common goal: the betterment of the people Springbrook supports. Moreover, the board oversees projects and initiatives that directly impact the lives of the people supported by Springbrook. The board members work to enhance high-quality programs, seize opportunities, and ensure Springbrook’s long-term success. CEO Patricia Kennedy commented: “Having Dr. Cardelle and Ms. Kriza on the board is a wonderful opportunity for the Springbrook community. They will add valuable knowledge of diversity, equity, and inclusion to our operations to support our mission and vision and offer new perspectives from their experience working in their respective fields.”

Welcome Amanda Fitzgerald & Bonnie Martin

New president-elect and member of the Springbrook Foundation Board

In August, Amanda Fitzgerald was elected president of the Springbrook Foundation board, which supports and solicits donor partnerships and funding integral to the daily operations of Springbrook. In December, Bonnie Martin was elected as a member of the Springbrook Foundation board.

Mrs. Fitzgerald is an attorney with Barclay Damon LLP, where she provides consultation for businesses in real estate and financial transactions. She has been a long-time exponent of expanding services and supports that Springbrook provides, as well as a volunteer and a generous donor alongside her husband, Dan, and their sons. She has been a member of the Springbrook Foundation board since its inception in 2018.

Mrs. Fitzgerald stated, “I am honored to take on the role of president of the Springbrook Foundation board. My family and I have had the privilege of supporting Springbrook since I was in my teens. Now, as a mom to four boys, my husband, Dan, and I understand the importance of teaching them to be grateful, generous, and kind. I am excited for the opportunity to work with so many compassionate board members and welcome Bonnie Martin to the group.”

Bonnie Martin is the vice president of operations at SUNY Cobleskill; she has been an administrator in higher education for many years. Before this, she worked as a non-profit administrator and grant writer. Mrs. Martin and her husband, Ted, have supported Springbrook for many years. Their son, Sam, attended the Kids Unlimited Preschool and is supported by the community homes program. On joining the board, Bonnie said, “My husband, Ted, and I have been so grateful for the support that Springbrook has provided our family—I am happy to join this board to give my support in return.”

Mrs. Martin is a member of the Southern Tier Connect Family Advisory Board and is secretary of the Board of Directors of the ARC of Delaware County (DelARC). In addition, she has served as a parent advocate for Delhi Central School’s Committee on Special Education and sat on the Board of Directors for the Delhi Campus Child Care Center (DC4), where she was a leading architect of the partnership between DC4 and DelARC which created an integrated preschool program in Delhi.

The Fitzgerald and Martin family have been longtime, generous supporters and donors to Springbrook. In addition, they have encouraged many of their family and friends to join them at that leadership level.



Amanda Fitzgerald



Bonnie Martin



GOOD NEWS ROUNDUP CONT.

CONNECTING OVER CRAFTS

“ART NITE”, sponsored by the Self Advocacy Group, brought tenants together to share their hobbies of painting, tie-dye, and clay molding with their neighbors at Century Sunrise Residences.

Self-Directing your services with Springbrook ensures flexibility to choose the supports that are right for you and your family, pursue passions and hobbies through events like “ART NITE”, select the staff and schedule of your choice, and choose the technology and expertise to support you every step of the way.



MAKING NEAHWA SPARKLE

Every year, dozens of local businesses come together in Oneonta to create magical displays with lights. Springbrook had the privilege of being a sponsor for this year's festival. Sponsorship of this event allows free admission for everyone who comes to see the lights and support Neahwa Park, a true gem in Oneonta.



GOOD FOOD, GREAT FRIENDS, AND GOBBLES!

Participants shared a Friendsgiving with one another and Mrs. Tom the Turkey! The day was filled with good food, laughs, and the occasional gobble from Mrs. Tom the Turkey herself!



TROLLS, COWBOYS, AND VAMPIRES — OH MY!

Classes of the Kids Unlimited Preschool held their Trick-or-Treat event within the Oneonta Campus. The kids dressed up in costumes and went door-to-door to receive treats from staff. Signs were placed at each “Trick-or-Treat” station, where kids collected their candy and gave a “Happy Halloween” in return. While one class went trick-or-treating, the other class hopped on a hay wagon pulled by a tractor from Springbrook Facilities to take tours around the Oneonta Campus.



A VISIT FROM MR. AND MRS. CLAUS

“Where are your reindeer?” inquired one of the kids at the Kids Unlimited Preschool during a surprise visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus. Santa was visiting from the North Pole to bring a little holiday cheer and a gift to the kids at KUP, who were dressed in their holiday best. Santa offered every kid a photo op and a chance to tell him what they would like for Christmas. Some of the gifts might surprise you: “A tractor,” said one; “A tractor snowplow,” said another; while another kid stated, “A unicorn.”



TALENT ALL AROUND

There was something for everyone at this year's talent show, including singing, choreographed dances, a few jokes, and martial arts! The “Lunch Ladies” got things started with a line dance. Lance Monroe of the Oak & Elm community home warmed up the crowd with some jokes after an engaging martial arts dance by Chris Luis of Blackstone. Rap artist Malcolm Thomas of Glensbridge performed two songs he had written. All participants got roaring applause from the audience—and three smiley faces from the judges—signaling a wonderful performance!



A MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE FROM THE MARTIN FAMILY

Serena Martin, whose son, John Martin, lives on our main campus as a member of The Tom Golisano Center for Autism, shared this message of gratitude with us. “I am so thankful for Springbrook. I placed my son, John, into the residential school program when he was 9 years old. Within a year I noticed such a huge difference. Before Springbrook, John ate pancakes - and only pancakes - for every meal for nine years! John now eats EVERYTHING! I am so happy with choosing to place John with Springbrook and have no doubt in my mind that he's in the best place for him.”



CARRYING THE TORCH

Self-Directed Services (SDS) recipient Michael Haefner participated in the NYS Special Olympics Summer Games Law Enforcement Torch Run, which started at Binghamton University and was relayed to Tulley in Vestal. Michael ran a portion of the torch run with his trainer, Kyle, from Synergy. Michael's mom, MaryAnn Haefner, shared that, “This is what self-directed (services) is all about – building bridges to the community. Kyle has been an amazing support and an all-around great guy for my son, Michael.”

GOOD NEWS ROUNDUP CONT.



HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

TRUNK OR TREAT AT THE SCHOOL AT SPRINGBROOK

Everyone got into the spirit this Halloween at the Annual Springbrook Trunk or Treat event! We are truly grateful to everyone who came out to share their time, creativity, and smiles.



GETTING CREATIVE WITH GINGERBREAD COOKIES

Congratulations to the winners of our Gingerbread House Competition! Thank you to all who participated in creating such amazing entries.

Here are the winning submissions from left to right: People's Choice - "The Candy Cabin", Most Creative - "There is No Place Like Home For the Holidays", Most Holiday Spirit - "Rudolf's House"



A DAY OF HOLIDAY CHEER

December 21st marked the 2nd annual Winter Wonderland at the Oneonta Campus for the Capstone Day Habilitation participants. This was a fun-filled day of holiday activities, visits with Santa and his elf, and a pizza lunch! Holiday movies were shown in one room, while another had arts and crafts for all. There was even the opportunity to write a letter to Santa.



GOOD NEWS ROUNDUP CONT.

JOIN US FOR

A JOURNEY ONLY

Beginning

Art Show Exhibition
featuring Springbrook Artists

April 1 - 31st | 9 am - 4 pm
The Fenimore Art Museum

*In case you missed last years Art Show,
here are some works that were displayed!*



SAVE *the* DATE

UPCOMING EVENTS AT SPRINGBROOK



5th Annual Special Olympics
Basketball Tournament

Saturday, April 22



Developmental Disabilities
Awareness Month

March 1 - 31st



Direct Support Professional
Appreciation Week

September 4 - 8th



The Annual Springbrook Gala
Returns!

Spring 2024 | Details TBD

STAY CONNECTED

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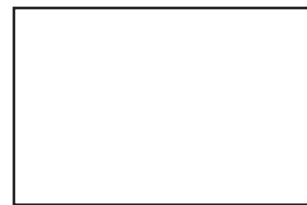
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MAKING THE DIFFERENCE FOR PEOPLE WITH
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