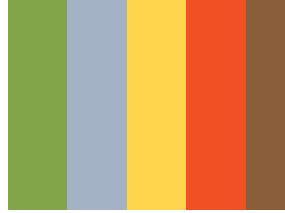




SPRINGBROOK

# Inspirations



**INSPIRATIONS MAGAZINE**

is published twice a year by Springbrook in Oneonta, NY.

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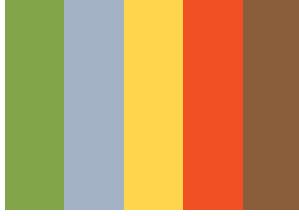
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**Cover: Thank you day photos.**

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



## A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Welcome to the Winter 2025 edition of *Inspirations*. Each time I prepare to write this letter, I take the opportunity to read the latest draft. Reviewing the magazine allows me to reflect on the past six months, reconnect with our mission, and to be once again reminded of the incredible work happening at Springbrook.

I am continually inspired by each person we support at Springbrook – their resilience, achievements, and ability to uplift those around them. I am equally inspired by each employee, who makes a difference each day, and by the generosity of our donors, whose support helps to transform good lives into even better ones.

This winter has brought a lot of snow, cold weather, and events that encourage us to reflect on what truly matters – our families, our friends, and the community we have built at Springbrook. The sight of students sledding down the hill outside of my office window brings joy to my day. The crisp air reminds me to be grateful for the warm, welcoming, and accessible space we create for those we serve. Challenges, both unexpected and profound, remind me to embrace the moments before us, cherish the people in our lives, and appreciate the meaningful work we do for the families and people we support at Springbrook.

As you read through this issue, take pride in all that we have accomplished together. **Celebrate the moments that matter, and remember the difference you make at Springbrook.**

Patricia E. Kennedy  
CEO

*"This winter has brought a lot of snow, cold weather, and events that encourage us to reflect on what truly matters – our families, our friends, and the community we have built at Springbrook."* - Patricia E. Kennedy



Students of The School at Springbrook sledding behind the Family Engagement Center.



# Widmy AT BLACKSTONE

Written by:  
Shaina Gormley

What kind of event features an ice cream truck and crowds of people in matching sweatshirts? **Widmy Leveille-Orion**

thought just that when she stumbled upon Springbrook's Direct Support Professional (DSP) Appreciation Week in September 2023. Widmy had just dropped off her friend after church, as she did every week, when the event caught her attention. Curious, she decided to investigate and spoke with some of the

employees there including Michael Basso, Director of Marketing and Public Relations. Michael explained, "We told her about Springbrook and the work we do, encouraged her to apply, and, of course, made sure she got some ice cream!"

Widmy has always found opportunities to care for others, such as most recently working toward her Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) certification. In the past, she enjoyed her work as a nursing assistant working closely with patients and deepening her understanding



Widmy with Blackstone staff and resident.

*"Springbrook is a great place to work. The people we support deserve to have people who care about them beyond a diagnosis."*

- Widmy Leveille-Orion

of practicing medicine. Now, she plans to continue her schooling and earn certifications to become an LPN.

Widmy applied for the position at Springbrook, and a few days later, she received an interview request at Blackstone Community Home in Binghamton, New York. The moment she arrived at Blackstone, she knew she wanted to work at Springbrook. "Dale Simmons, Day Habilitation Coordinator in Binghamton, opened the door and said 'Hi, thank you for coming early, thank you!' That, right there, just warmed my heart, and I thought, 'I have to get this job.'" The rest, as they say, is history.

Once Widmy began orientation, her interest in Springbrook grew. She identified with Springbrook's message of "putting people first." Widmy's warmth and dedication to leading with care and compassion are evident to anyone who spends time with her. During orientation, she learned about the importance of word choice and disability activism throughout various exercises and informational sessions. By the end, she felt informed and prepared to provide the best care possible to the people she would soon work with.

On Widmy's first day at Blackstone, she kept busy. "I'm not someone who likes to sit still," she said. She jumped into any work

that needed to be done while learning as much as she could about the home and the people who live there. At Blackstone, they joked that she was always asking questions, "But how am I going to get to know people without asking questions?" she explained. Widmy is honored to be welcomed into the homes of the people she supports. She values learning about each person she works with because for her,

**"The best way to know how to support someone is to know them individually."**

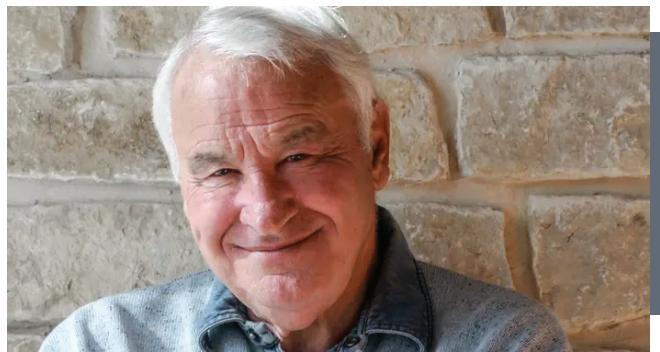
This year, Widmy celebrated Direct Support Professional (DSP) Appreciation Week as an employee! The week holds special meaning for her because she explains, "It reminds me that people are actually thinking about the work that we are doing." When she has a hard day at work, it helps to know how much her work is appreciated. By a stroke of serendipity, Widmy found Springbrook and she continues to use her gifts of kindness and care to exemplify the best attributes of a DSP. She hopes that everyone knows that, "Springbrook is a great place to work. The people we support deserve to have people who care about them beyond a diagnosis."

Widmy's story reminds us to be curious: you never know when you might find your next career or even free ice cream!

# Tom Golisano's Five Million Dollar Gift to Springbrook

Springbrook will receive five million dollars to advance its mission of supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Philanthropist and Paychex founder, Tom Golisano has given 360 million dollars in donations to over 80 nonprofit organizations, including universities, healthcare providers, animal care groups, and others across Rochester, Buffalo, Syracuse, and nearby regions in New York State. Among the beneficiaries, Springbrook—an organization with a long-standing relationship with Tom Golisano—was among one of the largest recipients.

Golisano's generosity is rooted in his philosophy of giving back. "The only wealth



Written by:  
Stephanie Curnalia

you get to keep is that which you give away," he shared at the Golisano Institute for Business & Entrepreneurship, emphasizing that this donation is not just about money but an opportunity for nonprofits to expand and improve their services. Springbrook is immensely grateful for this generous gift, allowing the organization to carefully assess and allocate resources where they will have the greatest impact.

Golisano and Springbrook have shared a long-standing relationship for over a decade. In 2010, Golisano provided funds to establish the Golisano School, which expanded services for children with autism. In 2012, the organization completed the 22.5 million dollar Coming

*"We are grateful to Tom for his generous gift. His generosity has helped the organization improve the lives of many children who attend the Golisano School program. On behalf of Springbrook, the children and individuals we support, and the board, we thank him!"* - Patricia Kennedy, CEO

*"The only wealth you get to keep is that which you give away."*

- Tom Golisano



Home Campaign, opening the Tom Golisano Center for Autism, a state-of-the-art facility offering specialized care and support for people with autism.

Springbrook's programs, which includes applied behavior analysis, art and music therapy, and various educational services, has become a beacon of hope for families across New York State. The organization celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Golisano Center for Autism in October 2022, reflecting on the progress made and the lives transformed over the past decade.

Patricia Kennedy, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Springbrook, expressed heartfelt gratitude for Tom Golisano's unwavering support for

the organization's mission. She shares, "We are grateful to Tom for his generous gift. His generosity has helped the organization improve the lives of many children who attend the Golisano School program. On behalf of Springbrook, the children and people we support, and the board, we thank him!"

Golisano's continued support and friendship also extends to training Springbrook's nurses through The Golisano Institute for Developmental Disability Nursing, at St. John Fisher University, enhancing the quality of care for people with developmental disabilities. His ongoing commitment continues to inspire and drive the mission of Springbrook and many other nonprofits, marking this donation as a catalyst for positive change in the community.



# Jofre's Christmas Mission

Written by: Shaina Gormley

*"My prayer is that the boxes will meet the needs and wants of the children they reach."*

- Jofre



This past December, 28 children experienced the joy of Christmas thanks to Jofre's incredible dedication and hard work. Jofre, a student at The School at Springbrook, spent an entire year fundraising and gathering donations for Operation Christmas Child. With support from physical therapist Faye Huntington, he launched this inspiring service project at The School. Operation Christmas Child is a global organization that delivers shoeboxes filled with gifts to children in need around the world, spreading holiday cheer and hope. Thanks to Jofre's efforts, these boxes brought smiles to children across the globe this Christmas season.

It is no surprise to anyone who knows Jofre that he spends his time helping others, but this project is particularly near to his heart. When Jofre was five years old, he received a Christmas box while living in an orphanage in Ecuador. The excitement he felt upon receiving a box inspires him to spread that same joy to other children.

The success of Jofre's Operation Christmas Child project was no small feat—it required careful planning, creativity, and determination at every step. Jofre's first phase of the project: milkshakes! Every Friday for a month, Jofre sold milkshakes to cover the shipping cost of the boxes. Jofre and Faye partnered with physical therapist, Deb France, to organize a milkshake fundraiser. He worked with Deb to plan the flavors, gather the supplies, and recruit other therapy team members to help. To advertise, he made signs and emailed school staff. Using adaptive equipment, Jofre made and delivered the milkshakes at The School. These delicious treats were a hit. After all of his hard work, Jofre raised enough money to cover the cost of shipping for 28 boxes.

With the shipping costs fully covered, Jofre turned his attention to gathering item donations from students and staff. He helped brainstorm

ideas for the perfect gifts, suggesting footballs and puzzles, while Faye added hair bows and stuffed animals to the list. Together, they compiled a list of needed items for donors. Faye described her favorite part of the project: "I most enjoyed seeing people work together to support Jofre in reaching his goal." This was truly a collaborative effort!

Jofre finds fun and fulfillment in volunteer work. As Faye shares, "He was always excited and proud when people asked him how much he had collected and what they could bring in." Not only is this project a passion of Jofre's, but it has a therapeutic benefit. When Jofre began packing boxes, Faye left him to work independently. Quickly, he learned that this was hard work. In the beginning, he could complete a few boxes before he would want to stop for a social break. Slowly, Jofre developed endurance and focus. With practice, he began packing boxes quickly and independently for longer periods of time.

Throughout the project, Jofre also developed a strong work ethic. The first time he packed boxes he made several mistakes, and Faye helped to fix them. By the end of the project, he was able to recognize his mistakes and ask for help when needed. He takes great pride in his work! This project inspired collaboration between students and staff at The School. Jofre expressed,

**"I am thankful to work with Faye, Deb, Janice, Christina, Jessica, Traci, and all Springbrook staff for their support."**

This incredible team of people, as well as all of the donors, made Jofre's work a success. Thanks to Jofre, the Springbrook community came together to brighten the Christmas of 28 children this year. For Jofre, his hope for the project's impact is simple and meaningful: "My prayer is that the boxes will meet the needs and wants of the children they reach."



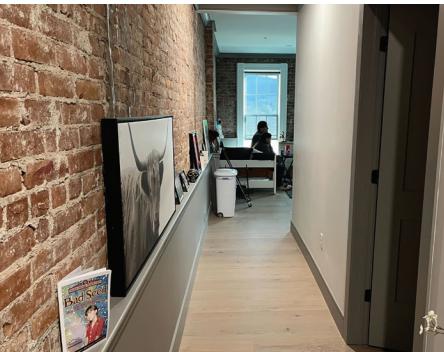
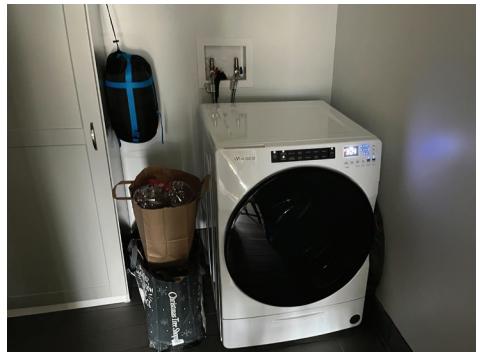
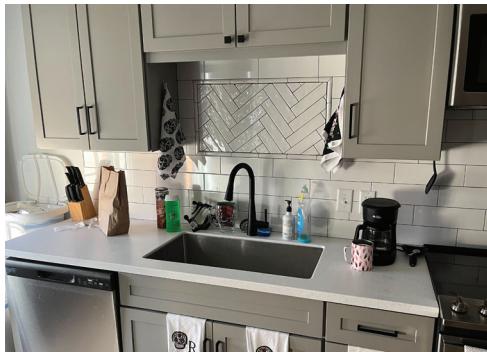


# Rachel AT THE FORD

Written by:  
Shaina Gormley

In May 2024, Springbrook hosted the grand opening of The Ford on Main project (The Ford), a transformative mixed-use development on Main Street in Oneonta, New York. This innovative building addresses a significant need for housing in the city, featuring 24 units, including four units reserved for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

Among its residents is Rachel, a fiery young woman with a quirky sense of humor. Rachel's apartment is a direct reflection of her spirited personality. The walls are adorned with photographs of family and pets, her original paintings, and movie posters from her teenage years. Each piece tells a story, from the doll her mother made for her as a child to the favorite chair she brought from her childhood home. These treasures serve as daily reminders of the people and memories she holds dear.



Previously living in Stamford, Rachel saw the opportunity to reside in Oneonta as an exciting new adventure. She grew up near Oneonta and was excited to experience living downtown. Now, everything she needs to live independently is within walking distance. Rachel walks down Main Street for doctor's appointments, a quick lunch, and regular nail visits, where she chooses bright colors and long nails for her manicures.

Rachel's move to Oneonta also brought her the support she had been seeking. Within a month of living at The Ford, Rachel connected with Ruth Lawson, a Direct Support Professional for Springbrook, who quickly became a mentor and friend. This summer, Rachel plans to join Ruth and her family for their annual camping trip at a local park. Ever the planner, Rachel has been purchasing camping gear "If I'm going to go camping, I'm going to do it right," she said, her excitement evident.



The Ford on Main is more than just an apartment building; it's a community hub and a cornerstone of Oneonta's Downtown Revitalization Initiative. Its shared living spaces foster a sense of connection among residents, and Rachel thrives in this environment. She recently worked with Ruth to bake cookies, which she delivered to her neighbors, and Rob, the maintenance manager for The Ford on Main apartments.

**"It's fun to share with everyone,"**

Rachel said. "I even met some new people while handing out cookies." When Rachel's neighbor was sick, she brought her soup and helped to take her dog out, showcasing her caring and community-oriented nature.

One of Rachel's proudest memories since moving into her new home was hosting her family to celebrate her adoption, a cherished annual tradition akin to a birthday in her family. Her mom, sister, and brother joined her for a joyous day, complete with takeout

*Rachel's story is one of independence, connection, and possibility.*

from a local restaurant. She is already planning future gatherings with her friends and family!

Now that she's settled, Rachel is pursuing the next step in her journey: finding employment. As a regular at Tino's and Latte Lounge, she has been inspired to work at a local business. Latte Lounge is located within The Ford's storefront space and serves as an extension of the residential community onto Main Street. Rachel's determination and vibrant personality make her a natural fit for the Oneonta community, and she is excited to contribute to the downtown she enjoys so much.

Rachel's story is one of independence, connection, and possibility. The Ford On Main project has been instrumental in fostering independence for people like Rachel, providing the opportunity and environment necessary to thrive. With her fiery spirit, quirky charm, and strong support system, she has built a solid foundation for a fulfilling life in Oneonta. We can't wait to see what's next for Rachel!



## A Journey of Growth and Responsibility

### Dates, Dogs and Dreams: Donnie's Story

Written by: Stephanie Curnalia

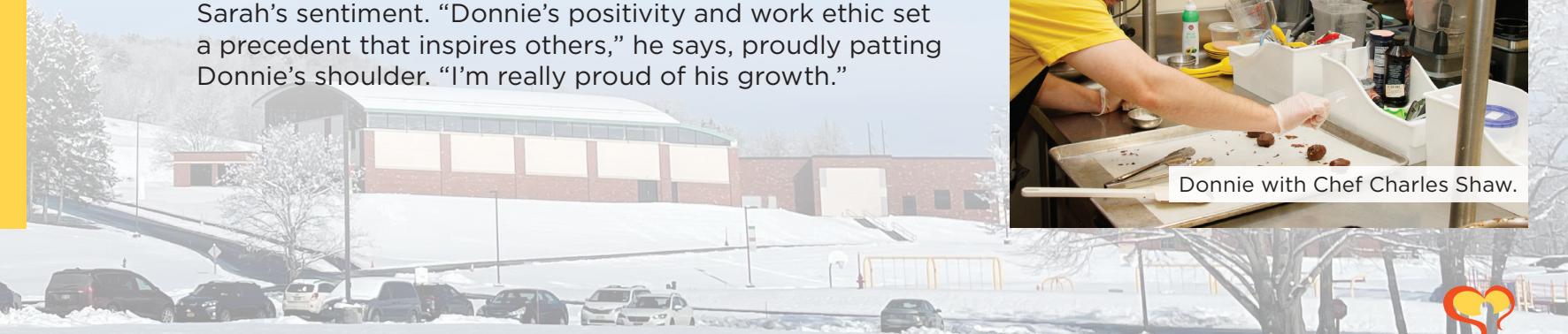
Donnie beams with pride as he stirs the melted cashew butter in the industrial kitchen of Springbrook's Capstone Day Habilitation (Day Hab) for Vésucré's latest project, "Dream Dates." These holiday boxes feature cashew butter-salted chocolate dates; a creation Donnie helps prepare. "It's vegan chocolate," Donnie quips with a chuckle, "but it's still good!" His humor and dedication are evident in every detail of his work, a testament to the growth he has achieved on his journey.

Donnie began volunteering at Vésucré, in the summer of 2024, drawn to its values of sustainability, inclusion, and quality. This local business known for creating happiness-inducing desserts that are plant-based, soy-free, gluten-free, and refined sugar-free, partners with organizations like Springbrook to offer employment opportunities for people with

intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). By November, Donnie became an Operations Associate, working Tuesdays and Thursdays in the cafeteria at Day Hab where Vésucré operates. Tuesdays are "Vésucré Dessert Days," where Donnie prepares delectable treats like Plant de Crème and the Dream Dates. Thursdays, he helps cook for the "Maketeria," which offers a make-a-bowl lunch option available to Springbrook residents and staff for purchase. This program is a collaborative project between Springbrook and Vésucré which aims to provide comprehensive training and employment opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the food production and culinary industries. From crafting make-a-bowl options to building Dream Date holiday boxes, Donnie embraces every task with enthusiasm.



Donnie with Vescure founder and CEO Sarah Hartmann.



*"I love talking while we work. The time spent with the people I work with and being part of cooking for the Maketeria means so much to me,"*

Donnie shares. Founder and CEO of Vésucré Sarah Hartmann knew Donnie had potential from the start. "I knew from day one that he was going to have a job here," she says. "Donnie's hard work and growth are evident in everything he does." Sarah's mission to create a welcoming, fulfilling community that is both rewarding and fun has provided opportunities for people like Donnie to flourish. Chef Charlie Shaw, Vésucré's operations director, echoes Sarah's sentiment. "Donnie's positivity and work ethic set a precedent that inspires others," he says, proudly patting Donnie's shoulder. "I'm really proud of his growth."



Donnie with Chef Charles Shaw.

*"Donnie's hard work and growth are evident in everything he does."*

- Sarah Hartmann  
Founder and CEO of Vésucré

*"It feels like having my own pets.  
I enjoy the affection the dogs share with me."* -Donnie



**Donnie's path to success wasn't always easy.** "There was a point I was going to quit everything," he admits. "I was late or never showed up. But I've been waiting for years to work at Vêsucre." With support from Springbrook and his former job coach, Shauna Solorzano, Donnie gained the skills and confidence needed for the workplace. "He's progressed far with his independence and work ethic," Shauna says. Donnie credits Vêsucre with fueling his passion for cooking. "I've grown a lot with my knife skills," he says. "I learned to take my time. I've even started using my skills at home by adding more vegetables to my meals." It is evident that Donnie takes great pride in all that he accomplishes with Vêsucre.

Beyond Vêsucre, Donnie has another meaningful role at Springbrook: working with therapy dogs Jake and Bailey in the Physical Therapy department. He takes them outside, rewards them with treats like green beans and frozen carrots, and practices commands like "sit" and "stay." Donnie has been working with Jake and Bailey since they arrived at ten weeks old. Springbrook Physical Therapist Karen Sacco, remarks, "Donnie is very proud of what he has done with the dogs." He shadowed Karen while she worked with the canine trainer to learn how to best train the therapy dogs. "It feels like having my own pets," Donnie says. "I enjoy the affection the dogs share with me."

This responsibility has strengthened Donnie's sense of routine. Karen proudly adds,

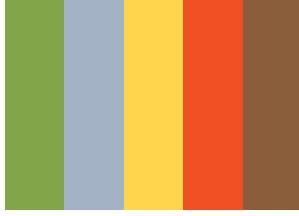
**"The dogs respond very well to Donnie."**

Donnie looks forward to his time with Jake and Bailey, and even commented that they know when he is approaching the room. Their wagging tails and slobbery kisses reassure Donnie that he's made a big impact on the therapy dogs' lives.

As Donnie continues to grow, he's excited about upcoming projects, including helping prepare meals for Vêsucre's "Friends of Christmas" event, which will provide 800 meals to the community. With Vêsucre expanding its product availability and creating new opportunities through another expanding program, called the "Makery," Donnie's journey is far from over. Reflecting on his accomplishments, Donnie shares,

**"I've learned that I want to be a chef someday.  
I'm really proud of how far I've come."**

From crafting desserts to caring for therapy dogs, Donnie's story is one of resilience, passion, and growth—a reminder that everyone has the potential to thrive when given the opportunity and support.



## THE CHARLES A. BELDEN MERIT CITATION

# Congratulations! William Hiskey

Written by: Tristan Pokorny



**The Charles A. Belden Merit Citation** is awarded to a Springbrook staff in acknowledgment of their unique contributions and outstanding service. The recipient of this award demonstrates a compassionate spirit and an exceptional level of care for the people Springbrook supports.

**William Hiskey**, fondly known by most as “Will” or “Willie,” exemplifies the meaning of this award and was rightfully presented the 2024 Charles A. Belden Merit Citation. Serving as a maintenance staff member for over 17 years, Will goes far beyond his duties to form meaningful relationships with students and staff. His attention to detail, personal interest in the students’ lives, and ability to solve problems in a calm and reassuring manner have made him an invaluable asset to Springbrook. Will is always finding new ways to improve the Main

*Will consistently shows up with a positive attitude and a determination to help.*



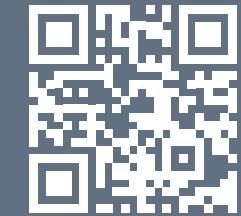
Will with Jim Murdoch and Director of Facilities, Kevin Morris.

Will with William Mirabito.

Will with Patricia E. Kennedy, Springbrook CEO and Seth Haight, COO.

Campus environment. He is attentive and stops every day to ensure on-campus houses run smoothly.

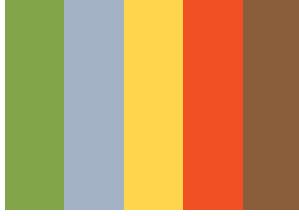
Will’s joy in working with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities is evident to anyone who works with him. He often brings puzzles and fun activities for the students simply because he enjoys spending time with them and takes an interest in what they enjoy. Despite facing personal challenges, Will consistently shows up with a positive attitude and a determination to help. His commitment, kindness, and passion for supporting others make him a deserving candidate for the recognition of the Charles A. Belden Merit Citation. Thank you, Will, for your hard work and dedication to Springbrook and the people we support!



Scan the QR code to learn more about Will and his dedication to Springbrook.



William with Ann Hutchison and her father.



## THE TRIUMPHANT LIFE AWARD

# Congratulations! Andrew Vandeusen

Written by: Tristan Pokorny



**The Triumphant Life Award** is presented to a person receiving services at Springbrook to acknowledge their inspirational attitude and triumphs. The recipient of this award has shown growth and determination through many avenues of life.

**Andrew Vandeusen**, an Oak and Elm Community Home resident, was presented the 2024 Triumphant Life Award for doing just that. Before his move in 2021 to community homes, Andrew lived with his parents. He was a quiet young man who often sat out of group activities. He spent most of his time looking out the window and keeping to himself. If asked a question Andrew would avoid answering. His parents often spoke of the trouble they had with getting him out of bed, getting him in the shower, and out of the house.

Since his move to Oak and Elm, Andrew has become more independent. His personal care has improved, and he is working on his

*Andrew is kind and helpful, and his sense of humor shines through.*

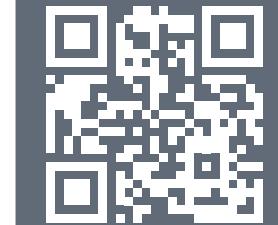


Andrew with Brenda Graham.

Andrew with Seth Haight, COO.

social skills by sitting with his peers and joining in on activities. In his free time, Andrew enjoys playing Name That Tune, Wheel of Fortune, and Deal or No Deal where he has mastered naming every song. Previously having a limited food palette, Andrew is now expanding his options and participating in cooking classes and gardening groups. He enjoys cutting fruits and vegetables and operating all of the attachments on the Kitchen-Aid mixer. In his new home, he enjoys cooking meals and sharing the fruit and vegetables grown at Capstone Day Habilitation Program with his housemates. Andrew is kind, helpful, and his sense of humor shines through in his actions with both friends and family.

Andrew has flourished in many ways, demonstrating that with determination and hard work, it is possible to develop new skills and form new friendships. We are all incredibly proud of the progress Andrew has made.



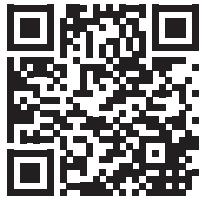
Scan the QR code to learn more about Andrew and his triumphs at Springbrook.



Andrew with Patricia E. Kennedy, Springbrook CEO, and Seth Haight, COO.

# DONOR DOLLARS at Work

Thanks to the support of generous donors and our community partners, Springbrook can offer lifetime support to the people who choose our services. Your donations go toward providing additional activities, therapeutic and recreational equipment, and support for educational programs for employees like the Springbrook Training & Education Program (STEP). With the continued generosity of donors, Springbrook provides support for a lifetime.



To make a gift, scan the QR code to visit [www.springbrookny.org/giving](http://www.springbrookny.org/giving) or text SPRINGBROOK to (607) 400-8008 today!



## Jamming with the Schramm Band

A roar of applause, the rhythmic tapping of dancing feet, and an infectious beat filled Springbrook's Oneonta Campus and The School's gymnasiums, thanks to The Schramm Band. Springbrook was thrilled to host the lively group, who performed a mix of covers and original songs throughout the day. Students especially enjoyed the chance to strum the bass guitar as the band's bassist mingled with the crowd. The Schramm Band never fails to deliver an unforgettable performance, and Springbrook eagerly looks forward to welcoming them back!



## First Day Fun at KUP

Kids Unlimited Preschool (KUP) celebrated the first day of school on September 8<sup>th</sup>, filled with smiles and excitement! With the support of parents and staff, the joy of the preschoolers was evident as they eagerly began their new school year. As a donor-funded program, KUP continues to provide affordable, integrated childcare and therapy services to support each child's growth.



## Springbrook Students Illuminate LUMA Festival

This year's LUMA Projection Arts Festival, held on September 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, was truly an unforgettable experience! The city was transformed into a visual wonderland, with stunning projection mapping illuminating the architecture. We're proud to share that students from The School at Springbrook had their artwork featured on the Peg Johnston Living Lights Project on Court Street.

It was incredible to see their creative pieces come to life on the historic buildings of downtown Binghamton, NY as over 30,000 festival-goers marveled at the artistry. What an amazing experience for the students at Springbrook to be part of this magical event!



## Scorpions Shine at Special Olympics!

The Springbrook Scorpions Special Olympics soccer team competed in Rochester, NY this past fall and delivered incredible performances!

In the Skills portion of the event, athletes came home with an impressive 3 silver and 3 gold medals in their respective divisions, showcasing their hard work and dedication. The Springbrook Scorpions dominated the field, securing the gold medal! They won 3-0 against Westside in the semifinals and capped it off with a 5-1 victory over Niagara-Orleans in the final. A huge congratulations to all the athletes for their amazing achievements this season!





## DONOR DOLLARS AT WORK

### Springbrook's 5K Miles for a Mission

Springbrook hosted a Miles for a Mission 5K event at Mirabito Stadium in Binghamton, NY, on Saturday, September 28<sup>th</sup>. The event welcomed over 100 participants, including both runners and walkers, and featured a variety of local sponsors, vendors, and collaborators, making it a truly memorable day for the community.



### Spooktacular Trunk-or-Treat at Springbrook

Springbrook hosted its annual Trunk-or-Treat event at the Main Campus in the Family Engagement Center (FEC) parking lot, which was a spooktacular success! Held on a surprisingly warm and sunny Thursday afternoon on October 31<sup>st</sup>, the event saw many creative costumes—from memorable Hollywood stars to daring superheroes, fairytale characters, and spooky creatures.

### Thank You Day

On Wednesday, November 27<sup>th</sup>, we thanked our generous volunteers and those who donate to Springbrook throughout the year. THANK YOU for making a difference in the lives of those we support!



Use the QR code to view a message of gratitude from Patricia E. Kennedy, Springbrook CEO



Steven with his family, Patricia E. Kennedy, Springbrook CEO and Seth Haight, COO at the Hardrock Cafe.

### An Evening of Music

On Monday, November 11<sup>th</sup>, Springbrook hosted "An Evening of Music," a fundraising event at the Morgan Library & Museum in New York City. The event featured a performance by world-renowned musicians and Springbrook parents Carmit Zori, Robert Rinehart, and their colleague Daniel Phillips. It was a beautiful evening filled with conversation, awe-inspiring music, and delicious food.

Springbrook Board of Directors President William "Bill" Mirabito was honored at the event. Mr. Mirabito was presented with the annual Springbrook Founders Award in recognition of his devotion to the unwavering realization of the mission and vision of Springbrook. This unforgettable fundraising event raised an impressive \$70,000 in support of the Springbrook Special Olympics program.



# GOOD NEWS



Scan the QR code to sign-up for the Good News Roundup (GNR) and get a little joy delivered to your email inbox every month! The GNR is full of good news and important Springbrook-related information.

## Olympic Opening Celebration

The School at Springbrook celebrated the 2024 Olympics with an opening ceremony! Each classroom crafted unique flags inspired by the students' interests and paraded around the school's bus circle. The parade, led by the Springbrook Bee and Principal Alyssa Horton, began with exciting Olympic facts shared by the adaptive physical education teacher, Jon Philby. Joseph, one of Springbrook's students, sang the national anthem to kick off this spectacular event. We are thrilled to highlight this wonderful display of school spirit and creativity.



# Roundup



## Honoring Milestone Employees

Warm embraces, contagious laughter, and memorable moments were shared by all at Springbrook's annual Milestone Employee Reception. This event was organized to acknowledge and celebrate each employee who has supported Springbrook and its programs for over 10 years. Milestone employees gathered at Ommegang Brewery in Cooperstown, NY, to connect with colleagues over delicious food, drinks, and outdoor games.

## Chris: The Heart of the Kitchen

Chris has worked at the Bassett Medical Center in Cooperstown, NY for over 10 years, where he prepares grab-n-go snacks and meals for the hospital. "He is always so happy to be here and be a part of the kitchen staff," expresses Becky (Rebecca), Chris' job coach for over seven months, who shares the impact of Chris' work. Chris looks forward to preparing pizzas in the near future while continuing to thrive as a valued member of Bassett's kitchen staff, spreading his positive energy and upbeat spirit to everyone around him.



## Obstacle Courses, Yard Games, and More

A FUN-tastic day was had by the students at The School at Springbrook! From the laughter on the playground to climbing and sliding through the inflatable obstacle courses, the day was all about bringing the Springbrook school community together. Students and staff could be found enjoying yard games like cornhole and participating in water games. It was wonderful seeing the energy and enthusiasm on such a beautiful sunny day.



## GOOD NEWS ROUNDUP

### Experience Springbrook Classroom Success

Six students share their incredible experiences and personal growth while interning at Springbrook. From classroom moments to community homes, their journey has shaped their career paths and deepened their understanding of themselves and others. The interns described their time at Springbrook as transformative, emphasizing the connections they built with students, residents, and staff, as well as the personal growth they gained through these relationships.



### Tom: Brightening the Otesaga

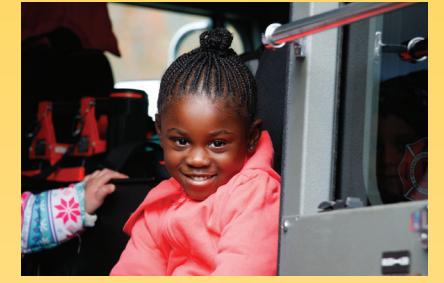
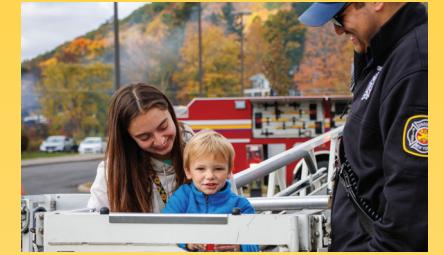
With meticulous handiwork, Tom handles each dish, cup, and utensil with care. He has worked at The Otesaga Resort Hotel in Cooperstown, NY, for over 10 years, where he manages and prepares all dishes for cleaning and sanitizing. Andy, Tom's job coach for four and a half years, shares, "Tom is happy, consistent, and always comes to work with enthusiasm for what he does." Tom hopes to work at The Otesaga Resort Hotel for many more years and to continue making a difference in his community, all with a big smile on his face and a positive attitude every day.

### Celebrating Direct Support Professionals Week

Springbrook celebrated Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) across the Oneonta, Sidney, Binghamton, and Norwich regions. DSPs were treated to delicious ice cream and coffee from The Scoop in Whitney Point, NY, and each received a gift card as a token of appreciation. This year, for Direct Support Professional Appreciation Week, we shared messages of gratitude and anecdotes about DSPs at Springbrook.



Scan the QR code to read more about 2024 DSP Appreciation week.



### Fire Safety Fun at KUP

Firefighters from the Oneonta Fire Department visited Kids Unlimited Preschool (KUP) for a presentation on fire safety. Firefighters showed the class how they put on a fire suit and explained all the different pieces and what they do. The students had an opportunity to ask questions before exploring the fire truck.

### Capstone Halloween Bash at Interskate

The Springbrook Capstone Day Habilitation Program gathered for an unforgettable Halloween celebration at Interskate 88 in Oneonta, NY! The event was full of laughter and joy as everyone donned their creative and fun costumes to enjoy roller skating, laser tag, arcade games, and delicious pizza.



## GOOD NEWS ROUNDUP



### Halloween Magic at KUP

Halloween magic was in the air at Kids Unlimited Preschool (KUP)! The kids enjoyed a Halloween-themed celebration featuring a festive wagon ride and trick-or-treating around the Oneonta Campus building. Dressed in adorable costumes from tiny pumpkins to brave superheroes, everyone had a blast collecting treats and showing off their Halloween spirit.

### BBQs, Fun, and Community Spirit

The Springbrook community homes hosted vibrant gatherings filled with food, fun, and community. Residents, staff, and family members enjoyed live music, outdoor activities, and mouth-watering treats, creating an atmosphere of laughter and joy.



### Thanksgiving Celebrations

Thanksgiving celebrations were in full swing at Springbrook this year! The School at Springbrook kicked things off with a delicious meal prepared by staff, bringing together students and staff to share in the joy of the season. The Family Engagement Center was filled with Thanksgiving spirit, featuring tables adorned with festive colors and holiday placemats ready for creative coloring.

The Capstone Day Habilitation Program also hosted a Thanksgiving lunch, serving all of the traditional favorites. Each table was beautifully decorated, with placemats hand-painted by those at the program the day before. It was a day filled with good food, great company, and gratitude for all!

### Spirit Week: Costumes and Creativity

The School at Springbrook was filled with energy and creativity as everyone celebrated Spirit Week! Students and staff celebrated the week by painting and carving pumpkins, letting their creativity shine in vibrant displays of fall cheer. Throughout the week, the halls were filled with costumes, from witches to storybook characters, spreading extra joy to everyone they encountered. Sports fans showed off their favorite teams, and bright colors were everywhere as friends and classmates matched in lively outfits.



### Holiday Highlights

The holidays at Springbrook are a time of joy and togetherness, filled with cherished traditions and festive activities. Highlights include the creative Gingerbread Contest, the spirited appearance of Buddy the Elf, and the magical Winter Wonderland. The Cherry Valley Choir spread holiday cheer with their beautiful performances, and Santa himself delighted everyone with special visits to The School, and the Oneonta Campus. These celebrations bring the Springbrook community closer, creating lasting memories for all.





# DAY of GIVING

*Bright Futures Begin Today*



Scan the QR code to learn more about our Day of Giving!

# SAVE *the* DATE

## UPCOMING EVENTS AT SPRINGBROOK



### Day of Giving

Tuesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025



### 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Special Olympics Basketball Tournament

Saturday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at SUNY Oneonta



### Developmental Disability Awareness Month

Month of March



### World Autism Month

Month of April



### Springbrook Community Art Exhibition

April 2025 | Fenimore Art Museum



### Springbrook Golf Tournament

Monday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025 | Leatherstocking Golf Course at The Otesaga Resort Hotel

*Stay Connected* Follow Springbrook on Socials!



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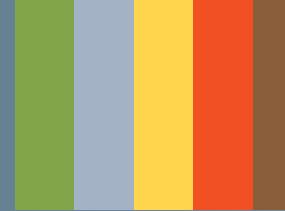


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# IN *Loving* MEMORY

At Springbrook, employees take immense time and pride in getting to know the people they support to provide the best care at every stage of their lives. We treasure every moment we have shared with those who recently passed, from laughter to tears, outings, celebrations, and milestones. In this section, we commemorate the people we have lost and take a moment to remember the impact each has made on us and those around them. We are honored that they have shared their lives with us and will forever keep the memory of them in our hearts.



## **Sylvia Armbrister**

11/23/1977 - 10/20/2024

Sylvia passed away on October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024. She was known for her strong will, unwavering determination, and love and support for her peers, friends, and family. Sylvia was a well-loved resident of Bird Avenue for eleven years. In her spare time, Sylvia loved to make crafts and attend craft sales. She had a love for '90s R&B music, often listening to artists like TLC. Those who visited Sylvia would likely recall the familiar sounds of that era playing in the background. She was deeply dedicated to her family. Sylvia called her sister, nieces, and nephews every day at 4:30 P.M. She cherished these conversations, staying connected with her loved ones daily.

Sylvia lived a life full of love and laughter. Her presence will be deeply missed by all at Springbrook.



## **David Izzillo**

05/05/1953 - 12/07/2024

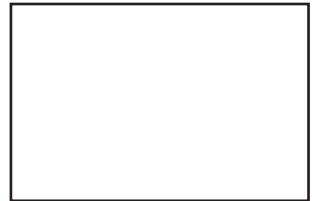
David Izzillo, 71, passed away on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at Bassett Hospital in Cooperstown, NY. He was born May 5, 1953, in Albany, the son of Akillas and Minnie (Ellis) Izzillo. David is survived by his stepbrother, Ron Baisley, sister-in-law, Sarah Baisley, his nephews Adam and Evan; and his friends and family at Springbrook. He lived at Nichols and Oak & Elm Houses during his 42 years at Springbrook.

David was a friend you could always count on to lend a helping hand. He had many friends in the Oneonta community, as well as at Springbrook, and remained close with his stepbrother, Ron, throughout the years. He was an active member of the Elm Park Methodist Church and sang in their choir for over 20 years. David took great pride in his work in The Workshop at The ARC Otsego. Everyone who knew David will remember his dry sense of humor, comedic one-liners, and love for Mickey Mouse. In his spare time, he loved to paint his nails with vibrant colors to match his bright personality.

David will be remembered for his kindness and care, which were evident to everyone who knew him at Springbrook. David lived a life full of laughter and friendship. His presence will be deeply missed by all at Springbrook.



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



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

