

DIRECTIONS

IN INDEPENDENT LIVING

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COMPEER at the Lucille Ball Museum pg 4

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COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT: VOLUNTEER

In Uniform and Beyond A Life of Service

Service is not just a chapter in Jonathan Hoshal's life—it is the thread that runs through everything he does. A military veteran, college student, and dedicated community volunteer, Hoshal exemplifies what it means to give back without expecting anything in return.

As a veteran, Hoshal carries forward the values of duty and responsibility long after his military service. He actively participates in Directions in Independent Living's Dwyer Veterans Peer-to-Peer Program, connecting with and supporting fellow veterans through shared experiences and mutual encouragement. He also volunteers with initiatives like Toys for Tots, helping ensure children experience the joy of the holiday season. During Christmastime, he can often be found greeting community members and spreading warmth and goodwill.

Hoshal's commitment to service is deeply personal. Alongside his daughter, he helps clean and preserve Allegany Cemetery, demonstrating the importance of respect, history, and stewardship. He also volunteers time maintaining ATV and UTV trails, preserving safe outdoor spaces for future generations.

In addition, Hoshal supports fellow veterans through Veterans Court and assists with WNY Missing and Identified Persons in Jamestown, helping bring answers and closure to families in need. Known for stepping up whenever help is needed, his willingness to serve is constant.

While maintaining this extensive volunteer work, Hoshal is also a senior at St. Bonaventure University majoring in Criminology with a minor in Sociology. He also serves as a Cattaraugus County Election Inspector, helping uphold the democratic process.



PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: COMPEER

COMPEER Visits Comedy Museum

I Love Lucy

Recently, members of the Directions in Independent Living COMPEER program enjoyed a memorable outing to the Lucille Ball Desi Arnaz Museum in Jamestown. The trip offered participants a wonderful opportunity to experience local history while strengthening friendships and building community connections.

The group spent several hours exploring the museum's engaging exhibits dedicated to the life and legacy of legendary comedian Lucille Ball. From classic television memorabilia to behind-the-scenes stories about the beloved show *I Love Lucy*, the exhibits sparked laughter, curiosity, and plenty of shared moments among the group. Many members especially enjoyed seeing authentic costumes, props, and photographs that highlighted Lucille Ball's groundbreaking career in entertainment.

COMPEER matches community volunteers with individuals seeking companionship and encouragement. Through shared activities like museum visits, community events, and casual outings, participants develop supportive relationships that help reduce isolation and build confidence.

The visit to the Lucy Museum was a perfect example of how simple shared experiences can bring people together. By the end of the day, members left with smiles, new memories, and a renewed appreciation for both comedy and friendship. It was truly a day filled with laughter, learning, and meaningful connection.



Hands on Growth in Action

Farm Focus

Callin, a participant in the Directions COMHAB program, has been making the most of his time through meaningful, hands-on experiences at Rustic Roots Stable. Even with unpredictable weather and occasional downpours, Callin spends his days working hard in the barn and arena, stepping in wherever help is needed.

From assisting with daily barn tasks to staying active in the arena, Callin has shown a strong work ethic and a willingness to learn. He enjoys keeping busy and takes pride in contributing to the day-to-day operations of the farm. His time at Rustic Roots Stable has also given him the chance to connect with the animals he enjoys most. Whether visiting the chickens, rabbits, or barn cats, Callin has developed a special appreciation for the animals and the environment around him.

Experiences like this are a valuable part of the COMHAB program, helping individuals build real-world skills in a supportive setting. Through his work on the farm, Callin is developing responsibility, confidence, and independence—skills that will continue to benefit him in many areas of life.

Beyond the tasks themselves, Callin's positive attitude and dedication stand out. He embraces each opportunity to learn and grow, even when conditions aren't perfect. His commitment is a great example of how hands-on activities can foster both personal development and a deeper connection to the community.

Keep up the great work, Callin! Your effort and enthusiasm are truly making a difference.



Skills That Last a Lifetime

Cooking Confidence

Participants in the Directions Transitions program recently came together for a hands-on cooking class that was equal parts fun and learning. On Friday, March 13, 2026, consumers rolled up their sleeves and worked side by side to prepare a delicious homemade mac & cheese with broccoli.

The class provided an opportunity for everyone to get involved in the kitchen. From measuring ingredients and chopping broccoli to stirring cheese sauce and assembling the dish, participants practiced simple but important cooking steps. With guidance from staff, each individual was able to contribute, building both skills and confidence along the way.

Beyond the recipe itself, the activity focused on developing essential life skills. Cooking promotes independence, encourages healthy food choices, and teaches teamwork. Participants learned how to follow directions, stay organized, and work safely in a kitchen setting—all while having a great time with their peers.

The atmosphere was filled with laughter, collaboration, and a sense of accomplishment as the group watched their hard work come together into a meal they could enjoy. Sharing the finished dish made the experience even more rewarding, reinforcing the value of effort and cooperation.

Opportunities like this highlight the impact of the Transitions program in helping young people gain practical skills for everyday life. By combining hands-on learning with a supportive environment, participants continue to grow in confidence and independence.

Great job to everyone who joined in and made this class such a success—we can't wait to see what's cooking next!



Beating Winter Blues Together

Beach Day Boost

Directions in Independent Living recently turned a cold winter day into a warm and energizing escape with a lively beach-themed Staff Advance. Designed to lift spirits and strengthen connections, the day brought staff together in a fun, relaxed atmosphere while still focusing on growth and professional development.

From the moment the event began, the beach vibes were in full swing. Staff embraced the theme with enthusiasm, trading winter blues for sunshine energy as they participated in team-building activities, games, and even creative "sandcastle" building challenges. Laughter and camaraderie filled the room, reminding everyone of the importance of connection in the workplace.

A highlight of the day was the recognition of Janelle Haseley, who was honored as Employee of the Quarter. Janelle's dedication, professionalism, and outstanding service to both colleagues and the individuals served were celebrated, making the award a well-deserved moment of appreciation.

Adding to the excitement, staff also took time to celebrate special milestones. Alyshia's upcoming wedding was warmly recognized, and Madison Crandall's soon-to-arrive baby was celebrated as a beautiful cake shared by everyone, adding a heartfelt and joyful touch to the day.

Staff members fully embraced the theme, with Nancy earning the title of "most beachy" for her standout look and spirited participation.

Beyond the fun, the day also included a meaningful training session focused on professionalism and maintaining appropriate workplace boundaries. This balance of enjoyment, recognition, and celebration made the Staff Advance both refreshing and impactful—proving that even in the middle of winter, a little sunshine can go a long way.



SPRING Employee of the Quarter

Janelle Haseley

Directions in Independent Living is proud to recognize one of our newest team members Janelle Haseley, as Employee of the Quarter for Spring! In just six months as an HHUNY Care Coordinator, Janelle has already made a meaningful impact by helping connect consumers to vital mental health, social, and physical health services, while also assisting with housing and food needs.

Janelle brings a strong sense of compassion and determination to her work each day. She finds the greatest reward not in a single project, but in those breakthrough moments—when a consumer achieves a goal they have been working toward for a long time. That sense of progress fuels her motivation and reinforces her commitment to empowering individuals to live more independent lives.

Janelle describes the HHUNY team as “go-getters”—kind, compassionate, and always willing to go the extra mile. She also values the supportive leadership at Directions, noting that they foster a family-like environment where employees are encouraged and uplifted. Her own contributions shine through her organization, dedication, and willingness to go above and beyond for those she serves.

Professionally, Janelle shares that this role has helped her rediscover confidence and grow more open-minded in her approach. She credits coworkers like Abbie and Amanda for their mentorship and encouragement along the way.

Outside of work, she enjoys diamond art and has a love for all things Disney, where imagination and joy take center stage. Her journey is a powerful reminder that believing in yourself can lead to incredible opportunities—and we’re so glad she took that leap with Directions!



5TH ANNUAL DIL SCRAMBLE

DIRECTIONS IN INDEPENDENT LIVING

Aug. 14th

Friday | 2026

Pine Acres Golf Course

1401 West Warren Rd.
Bradford, PA

\$80
Per Player

\$320
Foursome

Includes: Greens Fee, Cart Fee, 18 Holes of Golf, Hot Dog at the Turn, Dinner to follow

REGISTRATION	8:00AM
SHOTGUN START	9:00AM

Prizes & Contests	Sponsorships
50/50	Birdie \$200
Basket Raffles	Eagle \$450
Longest Drive	Hole Sponsor \$100
Closest to the Pin	Team Sponsor \$320
Longest Putt	

For more information, please contact Caitlin Metler at 585-933-0140 or cmetler@oleanilc.org

ALL PROCEEDS SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Confidence Through Creativity

Stitching Skills

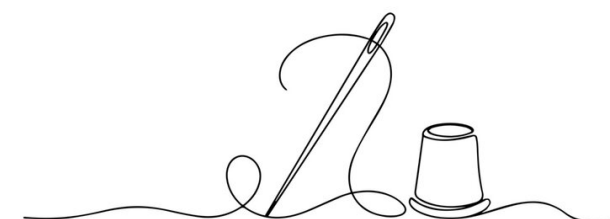
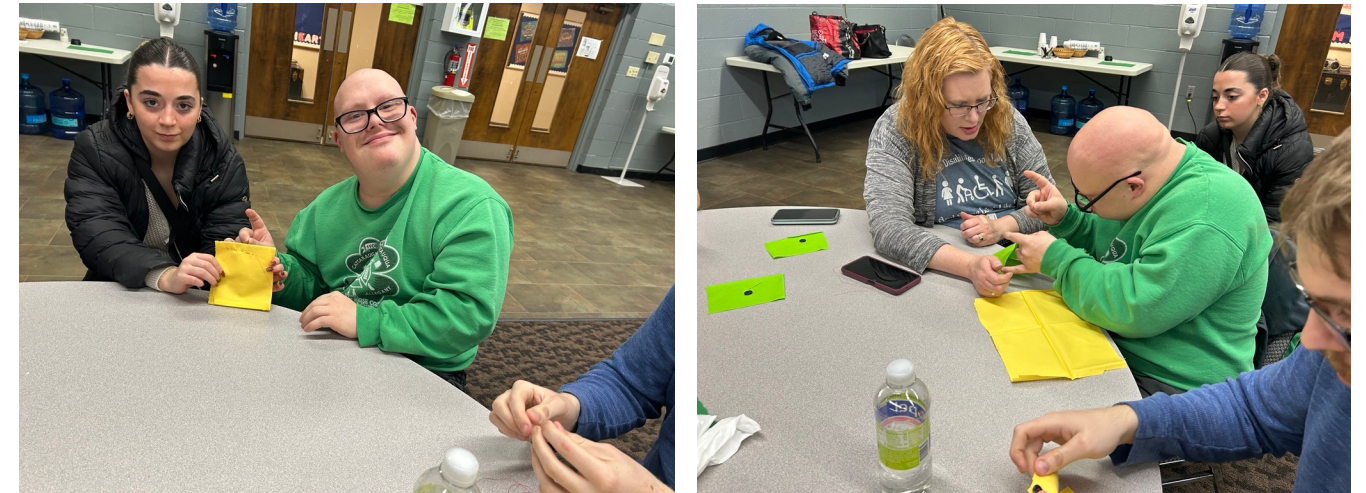
Participants in the Directions OPWDD program recently had the opportunity to learn a valuable and practical life skill during a hands-on sewing class. The session focused on teaching basic sewing techniques in a fun, supportive environment where everyone could learn at their own pace.

During the class, individuals were introduced to essential skills such as threading a needle, tying knots, and practicing simple stitches. They also learned how to mend small tears and holes in clothing—an important step toward greater independence in daily living. With guidance and encouragement from staff, participants quickly gained confidence as they practiced their new skills and saw their progress firsthand.

Beyond the technical aspects, the sewing activity encouraged patience, focus, and creativity. Many participants took pride in completing their work, discovering that even small repairs can make a big difference. The class also sparked conversations about sustainability, showing how repairing clothing can reduce waste and extend the life of everyday items.

Most importantly, the experience fostered a sense of accomplishment and empowerment. Learning to sew not only builds practical skills but also opens the door to future creative projects and hobbies. It was inspiring to see participants support one another, celebrate successes, and enjoy the process together.

Directions is proud to offer opportunities like this that promote independence, confidence, and personal growth. We look forward to seeing how these new skills continue to develop and inspire even more creativity in the future!





PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: COMPEER

Featured Consumer for March

John "Jonesy" Jones

This Spring, the COMPEER program is proud to recognize John "Jonesy" Jones as our Consumer of the Month for March—someone whose generosity, kindness, and commitment to helping others truly embody the heart of volunteerism.

John lives independently in Olean, NY, and brings a welcoming, friendly energy wherever he goes. Known affectionately as "Jonesy," he enjoys meeting new people, browsing yard sales, and cheering on his favorite sports teams—the Raiders in football and the Sabres in hockey. As a kid, he dreamed of becoming a professional bowler, a goal that reflects his lifelong appreciation for focus, consistency, and friendly competition.

Family has always played an important role in John's life. He grew up with three brothers, one of whom was born in Germany, and credits much of who he is today to his parents—especially his mother, whom he describes as a wonderful woman who raised him well. Her influence continues to inspire his passion for helping others.

Volunteering is more than an activity for John—it's a purpose. Through COMPEER, he has found meaningful connections, new friendships, and the chance to give back. His personal goal is simple but powerful: to stay well, live stably in his home, and continue supporting others for many years to come.

John chose to work with Directions because he believes in the mission—helping people live fuller, more connected lives. What he enjoys most is the feeling that comes from helping others and being part of something bigger than himself. John's compassion reminds us that community thrives when people show up for one another—and we are grateful he does.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: CHHUNY

Featured Consumer for April

Kevin Lasher

April's Consumer of the Month is Kevin Lasher, a young man whose humor, creativity, and positive outlook make him a joy to be around. Known by friends and family as "Kev," Kevin lives in Olean, New York with his mother and sisters, who have been an important source of support and encouragement throughout his life.

As a child, Kevin dreamed of becoming an astronaut, showing early on that he had a big imagination and an adventurous spirit. Today, that creativity continues through his love of video games, community theatre, and his interest in animation. Kevin says one of his biggest goals is learning to drive, while also continuing to work toward a future career in animation. In fact, when asked where he sees himself in ten years, Kevin confidently shared that he hopes to be working in the animation field.

Kevin also enjoys spending time with his three beloved dogs — Scooby, Bella, and Baby Cakes — and cheering on his favorite football team, the Miami Dolphins. One of his favorite places to visit is Disney World, a destination that perfectly matches his fun-loving and theatrical personality.

An active volunteer in community theatre in Olean, Kevin enjoys entertaining others and bringing laughter wherever he goes. He proudly describes himself as "very funny and theatrical," and those who know him would certainly agree.

Kevin says the most influential person in his life is his mother, whom he describes as kind, loving, and someone who taught him everything he knows. With his creativity, determination, and caring spirit, Kevin has a bright future ahead.



Featured Consumer for May

Nate Carleton

Meet Nate “Bucket” Carleton, our Transitions Consumer of the Month for May! Nate lives in Olean with his close-knit family, including his parents, brother, and grandparents. Family is a big part of Nate’s life—they share a love of bowling, and his mom, dad, and grandpa all volunteer with Special Olympics, something that has clearly inspired Nate’s own passion for giving back.

An active and caring individual, Nate enjoys bowling, disc golf, and cheering on his favorite teams—the Buffalo Bills and the Sabres. He’s also an accomplished Special Olympics athlete, earning a gold medal in cornhole and a bronze in bowling. When he’s not competing or spending time with family, Nate volunteers at Eden Heights Assisted Living Center, the SPCA, and has even helped distribute warming bags to those in need—showing his heart for helping others, especially friends going through tough times.

Nate has big dreams for his future. He hopes to attend aviation school, learn to fly a plane, and someday own a restaurant. Through his time in the Transitions program, Nate has built friendships and gained valuable life skills like budgeting, cooking, and stress management, which have helped him stay focused in school.

Nate says his mom is his biggest inspiration, always supporting him in everything he does. Looking ahead, he hopes to become more independent and continue building a meaningful, active life. We’re proud of you, Nate—keep soaring!



About our Agency

Directions in Independent Living is a non profit organization with locations in Olean and Wellsville New York. Directions helps people with disabilities live more independent lives. We have over 17 individual programs that specialize in many different areas or needs that these individuals may struggle with in their daily lives. The Directions organization has been described by its consumers as “understanding, supportive, accommodating, and family oriented.”

Every year, more than 1 in 5 New Yorkers has symptoms of a mental disorder, are stricken with poverty, or on the verge of homelessness. Moreover, in any year, 1 in 10 adults and children experience mental health challenges serious enough to affect functioning in work, family and school life. Also, nearly a quarter of veterans (22 percent) in New York state, were found to have a probable diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder and/or major depression. Compared to similar individuals in the general population, the veterans studied were at an eight-fold greater risk of probable PTSD and a two- to four-fold greater risk of major depression.

While many services are available to those in need, more than 40 percent of those in need of services or help report being unaware of what help is available or uncertain about how to navigate the systems that provide assistance. Outreach to connect these individuals with services and better coordination among government and community agencies is needed. We need a more combined effort put into connecting consumers with care coordinators who can provide personalized assistance across a range of service sectors. The existing system often misses those people most in need of outreach or those who have not yet connected with any assistance organizations.

That is why Directions in Independent Living was founded over 30 years ago. It is only through the generosity of people like you, that we are able to continue to serve, assist, and help our friends, neighbors, and veterans that are in need.

If you would, please consider making a donation, referring someone that might be in need of our services, or even volunteer yourself as a helper for one of our programs.

SCAN HERE TO DONATE



Helping those with disabilities live more productive lives.

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Serving Allegeny and Cattaraugus Counties in WNY, and limited areas of Chautauqua Cty as well as McKean and Potter Ctys in PA