Congratulations to Amoad Hanna, who was awarded the Personal Achievement Award at the 2013 Western New York Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day Celebration, held at the Niagara Convention Center, Niagara Falls.

Residents at the Red Spruce Drive home participated in “Spruce Up Greece” day, joining hundreds of other volunteers to help plant flowers, and clean up parks and other community spaces in their hometown.

Several members of Lifetime’s “Powers that Be” attended the 2-day Western New York Self-Advocacy Conference held in Batavia, where they enjoyed educational sessions and inspirational guest speakers and connected with others from across the region.

The Lifetime Assistance home on Chateau Lane in Greece was beautifully decorated with a New Year’s Eve theme as part of the 7th District Federated Garden Clubs of New York State’s 31st Candlelight Holiday Tour of Homes. Donna Lowry, a member of the Lifetime Assistance Board and the Garden Club, along with Kathy Armstrong and their dedicated team, decorated a total of seven homes for this annual event!
Celebrating 35 Years of Accomplishments

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PICTURED: Maria Bianco, Bethanie Mason, Daniel Lunn

Lifetime Assistance Inc.
Serving People with Developmental Disabilities since 1978
James Branciforte

It is a joy to share the wondrous news of promises fulfilled and dreams realized throughout this issue of *Lifetimes*, as we celebrate our 35th anniversary.

A highlight of our anniversary celebration (pages 6 & 7) was being joined by four of seven Agency founders: Ms. Donna Lowry, Ms. Mabel Koss, Ms. Doris Lista, and Ms. Nancy Harkin, and thanking them personally for their strength, courage and leadership in believing in better lives for their sons and daughters and delivering upon a promise of a better and brighter tomorrow.

In the spirit of continuing progress, we thank each of you who have been part of Lifetime’s proud past. In this *Lifetimes* we highlight one such remarkable individual, Ms. Rita Wagner, who has committed 25 years of volunteer Board service, and who, for the past nine years, has spread cheer and good will through weekly visits to our day services sites with her two therapy dogs (page 13).

I am frequently asked what the future holds for developmental disability services, given the many New York State public policy changes underway. First, let me respond that it is Lifetime’s unyielding belief that the future must continue to hold promise and progress for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Second, to achieve this will demand renewed vigor and strong, persistent advocacy, as there is no question that existing services and new service opportunities continue to experience tremendous pressures. In this regard, you will read of the strength of families who’ve taken an active role in advancing quality services as a top priority in New York State (pages 4 & 5). Through strong, united advocacy, along with creative planning, and developing new supportive options for individuals and families in need, we will assure continued high-quality, responsive, person-centered opportunities.

As we celebrate 35 years, we pause momentarily to marvel at the monumental, life-affirming successes realized throughout the years. We do so with eyes wide open and a commitment to redoubling our efforts to secure the hard-fought battles already won, and to take on the challenges and threats that lie ahead. Thank you to each of you who continue to “fight the good fight” for a future filled with promise and results for inclusive, meaningful lives for persons of all abilities.

Heartlines

Welcome, New Lifetime Assistance Board Member

Mr. Joel DiMartino is a Vice President & Senior Regional Portfolio Manager at Wilmington Trust, a division of M&T Bank. Joel’s interest in Lifetime comes from a sincere willingness to contribute his talents and expertise, in support of successful lives for individuals and families served by Lifetime Assistance.
Three Earn Eagle Scout Awards

Two men in Chili Boy Scout Troop 327 (an adult troop for Scouts with developmental disabilities) and a third young man in Troop 375 in Brockport have earned the rank of Eagle Scout.

Tim Kelly and Sam Burlingame, both of whom joined Troop 327 in 1992, recently became Eagle Scouts in an Eagle Court of Honor after completing challenging projects. Sam helped the Village of Churchville prepare for spring planting: he emptied, power washed, repaired, and painted twenty-three of the village’s flower boxes. Tim cleaned, repaired, and planted 120 flowers in flower boxes throughout the Gates Town Parks.

“The requirements for Eagle were the same [for Tim and Sam] as any other Scout,” said Dale Gagnon, assistant Scoutmaster for Troop 327. Both Tim and Sam have earned twenty-nine merit badges and received honors from representatives of Monroe County, the Towns of Churchville, Chili and Gates, as well as a representative from Governor Cuomo’s office.

Fourteen-year-old Brandon Baker, from Troop 375 in Brockport, received his Eagle in July, upon completion of his project. He built sixteen picnic tables for Lifetime Assistance homes and apartments. Five of these picnic tables were built for people with physical disabilities. He coordinated the entire project from start to finish, leading a group of family and friends that built the tables.

Congratulations to Tim, Sam and Brandon.

2013 Joanne Mills Award for Nursing Excellence

Dawn Fletcher, R.N.

Congratulations to Dawn Fletcher, R.N., recipient of the 2013 Joanne Mills Award for Nursing Excellence. This award is given each year to a registered nurse who shows exceptional dedication and compassion for the individuals in his or her care. Described as a “super nurse,” Dawn has worked at Lifetime Assistance for six years and supports individuals at the supportive apartments in LeRoy.

PICTURED: Debra Argus, Lori Siler, Jennifer Stow, Dawn Fletcher, Sandra Hamilton, Rachel Berezuk
When Ron and Susan Race contacted Lifetime Assistance in 2005, they hoped to find a group home where their son, Danny, who has autism, could live with others in a home with professionally trained staff. Today, they’re still waiting for a place for Danny.

Now 26 years old, Danny lives in his parents’ home and attends the day program at LAICO, a division of Lifetime Assistance, where he learns skills that allow him to do more things independently. Susan and Ron are now in their fifties, and they worry about what will happen when they can no longer look after Danny.

“Danny has never spent a night without us,” said Susan. “He lives by routine and the calendar. He deserves to have more to his life. On our own, we can only do so much.”
It’s a critical need they share with nearly 1,000 families in the greater Rochester area alone—and more than 4,200 families across the state.

“We have a waiting list that continues to grow,” said Ernie Haywood, Vice President of Residential Services and Development for Lifetime. “But there are no funds for new development.”

New York State is the largest user of Medicaid funds in the United States, making the state a target for federal spending cuts. “The state has made it clear that the current system is not affordable,” said James Branciforte, Lifetime Assistance President and CEO. “Future new offerings will be more individualized components or discreet supports and services—a menu of services, instead of a package.”

**A VISUAL DEMONSTRATION**

To bring attention to the number of families waiting for placement, a group called Family Advocates United came together during the 2013 Lilac Festival to display 1,000 flags on the campus of the Al Sigl Center—one for each individual on the waiting list. “Family groups held the rally to have a visual illustration of the wait list numbers,” said Deanna Mullins, Lifetime Assistance Intake Coordinator. “These people are bearing the brunt of budget cuts.”

Demonstrations like this one bring public attention to the issue, but Lifetime faces a much broader challenge: serving people who need assistance now. “We are being proactive,” said Haywood. “We are very focused on person-centered planning.”

**TIME TO GET CREATIVE**

Day programs like Lifetime’s Day Habilitation Services and LAICO work with individuals to build skills that can lead to greater independence. These programs also provide caregivers with much-needed respite during the day.

“We’re working with people who have the ability to be employed, but are not yet ready,” said Marty Reeners, Director of Vocational Services for Lifetime.

Families find Lifetime’s day program options crucial,” said Amy Mitchell, Director of Day Services. The day service program serves individuals at many locations where they participate in activities that meet their specific needs. “To a lot of individuals and families, if it weren’t for the day services, life would be extremely difficult,” she said. “We provide vital support for people who have medical or behavioral challenges, too. In support of individuals seeking new opportunities, the day program has added two additional hours from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. “This is a well-rounded support service with transportation home around dinnertime,” said Mitchell.

**NEW RESIDENTIAL OPTIONS**

Since the opening of the first home in Brockport, Lifetime Assistance has grown to more than 50 sites, all of which are in neighborhood homes and apartments throughout the greater Rochester region. Lifetime offers alternatives to group-home living, like “Shared Living” and “Family Care.”

Lifetime’s Shared Living option offers individualized home support where a non-disabled person lives in the home with an individual needing support. The individual benefits from a supportive setting while still enjoying their independence.

Lifetime offers a Family Care Program for individuals who would like to live with a supportive family. “We look for supportive adults who would like to share their home with an individual with a developmental disability,” said Maria Rugg, Associate Director. “We currently have sixteen care providers who provide warm, loving, supportive homes.”

“In the end, it comes down to offering high quality choices,” said Branciforte. “We are taking the challenge head-on. We are going to be as creative as public policy and reimbursements allow.”
In 1978, a group of loving parents founded Lifetime Assistance to give their children with developmental disabilities the tools to achieve the highest possible level of independence and satisfaction. Their dream: for adult children and others to have opportunities to develop life skills, to pursue their individual goals and dreams, and to enhance their pride and self-respect as productive members of the community.

Back then, Lifetime Assistance supported 32 people at a single location at the Agency’s first Day Services program at One Clinton Street in Brockport.

Fast-forward 35 years, and Lifetime Assistance supports nearly 2,000 people at more than 60 locations across Monroe and Genesee Counties, helping dreams to become realities.

On October 25th, more than 800 people came together at the Diplomat Banquet Center to celebrate the 35th Anniversary of Lifetime Assistance and to recognize the Agency’s outstanding accomplishments over the years. It was a wonderful honor to have four founding board members in attendance. Their courage and leadership helped to pave the way for the multiple successes that we celebrate today.

“There is something very rare and special at Lifetime Assistance – a deeply caring organization that is full of energy, creativity and fun. It is magical at times and I’m privileged to be part of this great legacy,” said James Branciforte, Lifetime President & CEO, who celebrated 25 years with the Agency at the event.

Also in attendance was local celebrity and Lifetime friend, Don Alhart, who emceed the event. The evening was filled with inspiring stories, amazing food, and wonderful company. Many of the guests danced the night away to the amazing music of the band FLAME.
1. (left to right) Lifetime Assistance Founding Board Members, Doris Lista, Nancy Horan, Mabel Koss and Donna Lowry

2. Charlene Detch received a recognition award for her dedication to the Lifetime Family and Friends Group. L - R, Don Alhart, Charlene Detch, Kaityn Detch, James Branciforte.

3. Matt Crowley and his mother Mary Ann Comstock – Matt received an award in recognition of the many hours he has volunteered for the Lifetime Family and Friends Group.
Gates Chili Chamber of Commerce
Charity Golf Tournament

We couldn’t have asked for a better day. Monday, August 19th turned out to be a spectacular day to play golf. More than 90 golfers participated to show their support for a wonderful cause – the Lifetime Assistance Foundation.

Hosted by the Gates Chili Chamber of Commerce, the golfers enjoyed fabulous food, a round of golf and the opportunity to put their golf skills to the test with a variety of challenging contests throughout the course.

At the end of the day, more than $7,500 was raised to support the Lifetime Assistance Foundation, which provides funding to Lifetime Assistance, Inc. for special projects and equipment, programs and services, and scholarships for employees looking to further their education.

Sincerest thanks to the Gates Chili Chamber, and to all of the volunteers and golfers who helped to make the event a tremendous success.

Perspective
It’s hard to believe Winter has arrived! We’ve had an incredibly successful year.

We hosted our 14th Annual Lifetime Assistance Airport 5K, and the Gates-Chili Chamber of Commerce Charity Golf Tournament. The generosity of our community is overwhelming, and we are all truly grateful to everyone who participated and helped to raise funds to support programs and services to support individuals in our community who have developmental disabilities. We couldn’t possibly do what we do without you.

On behalf of everyone at Lifetime Assistance, thank you for your support, caring and dedication. If you would like to learn more about the Lifetime Assistance Foundation and how your support can dramatically impact our mission, please feel free to contact Kimberly Cenzi, Administrative Assistant at (585) 784-3116 or kimberly.cenzi@lifetimeassistance.org
Airport 5K a Soaring Success

On Saturday, June 22nd, the 14th Annual Lifetime Assistance Airport 5K, presented by Wegmans, took place at the JetSmart Hangar at the ROC - the Greater Rochester International Airport. With more than 800 people in attendance, along with local food and beverage vendors and more than 110 volunteers, the event was the premier Rochester fundraising and running event in 2013, raising more than $78,000.

Our special guest, Abby Wambach, highlighted the event, providing insight into being a professional athlete and the time and dedication it takes to reach your life’s goals.

Congratulations to our race finishers, especially our first-place finishers – Men’s Division: Peter Geoghagen, Syracuse, NY with a time of 14:51, and Women’s Division: Dana Buchanan of Rochester, NY with a time of 17:02.
When more than 600 people attended a Lifetime Assistance Family and Friends (LAFF) barbecued chicken dinner this summer, the LAFF’s steering committee knew that it was on the right track.

Families who care for their family member with a developmental disability at home may have trouble getting an evening out like this, so LAFF’s will pair a recreation event for both the families and individuals. Anyone who has a family member receiving services from Lifetime Assistance is warmly welcomed to the group.

The LAFF’s steering committee shares ideas for events that they believe will be of interest to families, and then extends the invitation to all LAFF’s members. Frequently the topics cover insightful and helpful information, such as estate planning and guardianship.

The main purpose of LAFF’s is to connect families with other families. This has sparked a new monthly event, “Coffee & Conversation,” which offers families the opportunity to meet other families in similar situations.

To learn more about the Lifetime Family and Friends Group, contact:

Sandy Dyer
(585) 426-4120 ext. 3305
Sandy.dyer@lifetimeassistance.org or “Like Us” on facebook for updates.
More than 125 volunteers showed how much they care about Lifetime Assistance and individuals with developmental disabilities by donating their time and talents to help spruce up several of our group homes and day services sites.

By participating in the United Way Day of Caring, businesses have an opportunity to support their communities, allowing employees to take time out of their busy schedules to spend time volunteering.

Can lifting large amounts of weight help people maintain better balance? That’s what Dr. Francis Kozub, professor of physical education at the State University of New York at Brockport, plans to find out. Working with the Lifetime Assistance Special Olympics powerlifting team, Dr. Kozub is studying whether lifting heavy weights on a regular basis impacts an individual’s balancing ability.

The athletes have agreed to help study the benefits of their sport at the Brockport campus, where they work with college students from Dr. Kozub’s adapted physical education class. The athletes train in three kinds of weightlifting: squat, bench press, and deadlift, and the students collect data on balancing activities.

“Integration into the community is one of the goals of the Recreation Program at Lifetime Assistance,” said Pat Dadey, Lifetime’s Recreation Coordinator and Head Special Olympics Coach. “I am not sure who enjoys the powerlifting experience with Brockport College more… our Special Olympians from Lifetime Assistance or the students from SUNY Brockport. We are already planning for 2014!”
Finding the joy in life is something we all strive to accomplish. But for Rita Wagner and her two therapy dogs, Joey and Widget, joy is something they manufacture every day.

Rita has been a dog lover her entire life. But while caring for her elderly mother, she discovered that Joey and Widget had unique gifts. The dogs had the ability to raise her mom’s spirit and encourage laughter whenever they were near her. Rita quickly recognized her opportunity to share this wonderful gift with an organization that was very close to her heart.

Rita’s 25-year commitment as a member of both the Lifetime Assistance and Foundation boards of directors made Lifetime a natural place to share Widget and Joey’s extraordinary talents.

Rita and the dogs enrolled in an intensive ten-week pet therapy training program that both dogs passed with flying colors. Soon after, the trio started volunteering their time at the Lowry Center and the Sweden Senior Center, Day Programs for individuals with developmental disabilities supported by Lifetime Assistance.

For the past nine years, Rita, Widget and Joey have visited Lifetime Assistance weekly. Participants at the Day Programs look forward to their arrival, a friendly bark and a wagging tail.

Rita explains, “The joy and connection experienced by people at Lifetime Assistance remind me of how fortunate I am to be able to give back to those with special needs.”

To learn more about this remarkable story, please visit DayinaLifetime.com
Highlight on Our Homes

Renovations at our Buffalo Road home will bring many positive changes to the house, providing a more comfortable and accessible home.

“It’s pretty exciting,” said Brenda Honeck, who oversees the home. “The individuals living at Buffalo Road are really fascinated by the process and can’t wait to see the final results of the renovations.”

Contractors have remodeled the home to make it accessible for residents with physical disabilities. The new configuration includes a ramp, a fully accessible bathroom and a more open floor plan.

Perhaps the most welcome addition to the house is a beautiful new deck and community room for the residents to enjoy, whether relaxing or gathering with friends and family.

PICTURED TOP: Maureen Dorley (seated); Stella Adejumoh; Sarah Dick; Janine Westa (seated); Brenda Honeck

PICTURED BOTTOM: Brenda Honeck, Wayne Hayden and Sarah Dick
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