



A letter from our President and CEO



Dear friends,

2020 is finally over. And not a moment too soon. It was so different from anything any of us has ever seen or lived through and the most challenging year in Richmond's history. It started regular enough, but by February, everything changed. We entered an environment that none of us knew anything about and one that we needed to be at our best to

protect our residents and staff. We acted swiftly and formed a COVID-19 response team that started working on a plan to protect staff and residents, continue running the agency while following all Department of Health (DOH) and OPWDD rules. Mid-March, DOH, and CDC came to visit 919 and told us that they were impressed with our preparedness and plan of action. What followed were long and exhausting months of work and worry for all Richmond residents, staff, and families. We closed day programs and then stopped visits to group homes. Everything was on lockdown for four months. We started with daily update videos that were posted on our website and social media. We developed training on COVID-19 and how to protect from it presenting it in several different ways, including electronic training platform (Relias), videos, in-person training, and written materials.

We were fortunate to have so many families and volunteers reach out to us and offer to make masks for our staff. We received hundreds of cloth masks from various groups. We also received hundreds of surgical masks from several elected officials (Mayor of Yonkers Mike Spano and Westchester County Legislator Ruth Walter). We are grateful to all and to the New England Joint Board UNITE Here (DSP union) for donating N95 masks to Richmond. With a lot of hard work and some luck, we were able to identify reliable vendors who delivered our PPEs on time and at a reasonable price. With pride, we say that our staff had all needed PPEs at all times. Like all other healthcare providers, we had to modify the wearing schedule for PPEs based on CDC and DOH recommendations.

But all of this would do no good to our residents if we did not have fantastic staff who carried the burden of working under extremely stressful conditions for months. DSPs, nurses, housekeeping, laundry, and maintenance staff carried the torch and worked tirelessly, more

than their fair share of shifts, to protect the residents and provide them with some sense of normalcy. They were all concerned for their own and families' health and safety. Despite that, they all showed up every day and provided care and support to our residents. Richmond professional staff changed their roles and did whatever we needed them to do: some became assistant managers while some changed their work hours, all to accommodate the agency's needs. Finance Department staff started working from home and continued to provide excellent service to employees and the agency. Workforce Development, with lightning speed, changed new hire orientation and shifted all training to virtual. HR adapted the hiring process to the new reality and continued to hire and process new employees while maintaining excellent customer service to all employees. The Quality Enhancement Department had to develop new ways of reporting new required data to OPWDD and DOH. IT department shifted to remote support of all technology needs. Richmond's Managers and Directors worked endless hours and never wavered in their dedication to Richmond and the people we support. Richmond's Board of Directors, with leadership by Chairman Nick Spano, helped Richmond management in navigating the new environment. They provided the agency and me with their expertise time and advice that were invaluable.

I am grateful to all staff for their contribution to resident care and protection during this pandemic. Without all your hard work, we would not do right by our residents and their families, our staff, and the field of developmental disabilities. In the DD field, Richmond is considered an agency that did a great job with the COVID-19 pandemic. I had the pleasure to share our strategy in fighting the pandemic with other agencies in various forums. As a relatively small agency, it is an excellent recognition by fellow agencies to be asked to share our way of doing things. That is our collective success; we did it together.

The vaccine is finally here, and now we have a way of stopping the virus. The more people get vaccinated, the greater chance we have to win this fight and go back to the life we love and miss. I am looking forward to 2021 to be a better, healthier, and happier year for all of us.

With gratitude,

Paca Lipovac

New Programs at Richmond Community Services

Site-based Respite

We now have respite for children once a month on Sundays in our Mount Kisco location.

The site-based respite program also ran for two weeks at the end of the summer between the end of summer school and the start of the new school year. The program has been running when there is no school (holidays) and we also ran a Friday night program to give parents a night out for themselves. Apple picking was a Sunday activity.

Community Habilitation

Richmond is working with people throughout the community on developing various skills such as money management, transportation training, community inclusion, independence with daily living skills, healthy living choices, and more. We now are serving people not only in Westchester but also in Rockland and Orange Counties. The main aim of Community Habilitation is to support children through adults in increasing their independence and inclusion in the community.

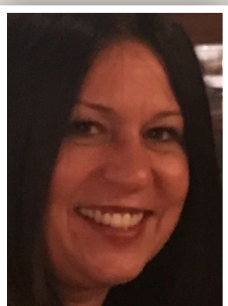
Two New Vocational Programs

SEMP (Supported Employment): This program helps individuals with I/DD find and maintain employment. We have been approved to provide this service and are in the process of enrolling the first two people in the programs.

Community Pre-Vocational Services: This program prepares individuals with developmental disabilities for paid employment or meaningful community activities, including volunteering. We are in the process of enrolling people in this program.

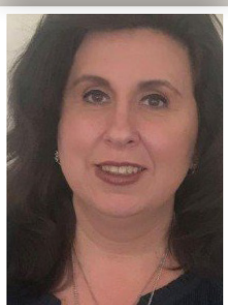


Staff Personnel Changes



Frances Laden

Director of Quality and Person-Centered Services will oversee the QIDP Department.



Penny Pagliaro

Chief Strategic Officer/VP of Waiver Services will oversee and manage the new Waiver Services Programs.

Events and Donations

Although our annual fundraising events have been cancelled this year we were still able to raise funds from our most generous individual and corporate donors:

- **Our COVID-19 Relief Fund has raised so far over \$160,000.** *This money has gone to pay for PPEs for staff and resident protection. All donations to the COVID-19 Relief Fund came from generous donations from individual donors.*
- **We raised over \$34,000 from the virtual golf outing and \$7300.00 from the virtual Wine Event.**
- **Our year end appeal raised \$16,000 and we thank Terri and Steve Schottenfeld for their tireless efforts in making the year end appeal so successful.**

To make a donation please go to our website or call 914 471-4100

New Foundation Board Members *Terri and Steve Schottenfeld*



The Richmond Foundation Board is fortunate to have as its newest members Terri and Steve Schottenfeld, whose twin adult children, Bradley and Lara, have been living in the Mountain View House in Peekskill for the last nine years. The Schottenfeld household has been a busy hub, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic when the twins' siblings, Calli, Brent, and Keith, have all gathered at their Chappaqua home, along with their grandchild and pets. Bradley and Lara remained quarantined in Mountain View.

When asked why at this busy time they committed to the Board, Terri said, "How could we not when we see the involvement of other Board members, some of whom do not even have children at Richmond." Fundraising, which has become more significant now than ever due to increased costs due to COVID-19 plus impending large State and Federal budget costs, will be the main focus for Terri and Steve.

Their involvement with Richmond goes back ten years when Terri started to volunteer at the Goldman House, saw how wonderfully the residents were cared for, and decided to place Bradley and Lara, age 22 at the time, both having developmental and intellectual disabilities, with Richmond.

Until the pandemic started, they spent every weekend with the twins, bringing them home or going to malls, but things then dramatically changed. Due to NY State restrictions, they could not see them from the middle of March to the beginning of July. With the assistance of the house staff, visits were limited to FaceTime every day. Both Terri and Steve are so appreciative of the staff in making these "visits" possible and are comforted knowing that all the people that Richmond supports are so well cared for and safe. They are also thankful to the Richmond administration for their constant responsiveness to inquiries and requests. Steve says, "There is no bureaucratic chain of command-we quickly get to the right person who can give us the answers we need."

Both Terri and Steve hope to get others involved in donating by tapping into and broadening their network of people who are willing to contribute to this unique organization, Richmond Community Services.

Richmond Community Services Board of Directors

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Foundation Board of Directors

Joseph Pugni, Jr., *Chairman*
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Susan Goldman
Carol Baron
Terri Schottenfeld
Steve Schottenfeld

Events

Visit Our Website at
richmondcommserv.org

Virtual FunFest

FunFest was held this year with a twist due to COVID-19. RCS took FunFest on the road and went to each house in the community to have some fun with the residents. The team brought games, snacks and joy.

This was a great way to continue the spirit of FunFest during these challenging times.



Mission Statement

Richmond Community Services, in partnership with all members of the community, supports children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families, to achieve the highest quality of life through individualized services, life enhancing strategies, education, and advocacy, with particular expertise in meeting the needs of those with complex health issues.

Winter 2021 Newsletter

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