SUSTAINING RESILIENCE: HOLDING ON TO

HOPE

29th Annual
MY CITY, MY PLACE
Brighter Futures Awards

2020 award nominees

It's all about community!

Virtual
March 25-26, 2021 • 3-4:00 PM

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

PROCLAMATION

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH
March 2021

WHEREAS, people with a developmental disability are of all racial, ethnic, educational, social, and economic backgrounds, and all are valued members of society who find fulfillment living everyday lives; and

WHEREAS, we value what is important to people with disabilities and their families who are striving for everyday lives no different than those of all other citizens; and

WHEREAS, I signed an executive order to increase integrated employment opportunities among people with disabilities in Pennsylvania because I recognize that individuals with disabilities have the capacity to positively contribute to the development of Pennsylvania's economy; and

WHEREAS, my administration and the Department of Human Services launched the Supporting Families Initiative, which provides grants to regional collaboratives to encourage families of individuals with developmental disabilities or autism to have high expectations for full and purposeful lives that include meaningful jobs in the community, friendships, health, safety, and spiritual and social opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Human Services continues to increase opportunities for competitive, integrated employment across the commonwealth for those with developmental disabilities who wish to work; and

WHEREAS, educational opportunities for those with developmental disabilities have increased with the implementation of inclusive secondary education certificate programs at Pennsylvania institutions of higher learning; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Human Services continues to offer opportunities to individuals and family members through a growing complement of training initiatives and services that allow them to increase their knowledge about advocacy, supports, and disability services; and

WHEREAS, early intervention, education, employment, and home and community-based services continue to be vital to enabling citizens with a developmental disability to enjoy the rights of citizenship and to participate in the life of Pennsylvania's communities.

THEREFORE, to recognize the many accomplishments and contributions of people with a developmental disability, I, Tom Wolf, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, do hereby proclaim March 2021 as DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH. I encourage all citizens to support Pennsylvanians with a developmental disability and their families in all aspects of Pennsylvania community life.

GIVEN under my hand and the Seal of the Governor, at the City of Harrisburg, this first day of March two thousand twenty-one, the year of the commonwealth the two hundred forty-fifth.

TOM WOLF
Governor

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services
Promoting Recovery, Resilience & Self Determination

Jill Bowen, Ph.D.
Commissioner

Roland Lamb
Deputy Commissioner

Sosunmolu Shoyinka, M.D.
Chief Medical Officer

March 25, 2021

Greetings,

Welcome to the 29th Annual My City, My Place Brighter Futures Awards. We invite you to join us as we reflect on our rich history and advance into the future. This year's theme: "Sustaining Resilience: Holding on to Hope," will highlight the importance of perseverance during difficult times. We want to honor individuals who, despite the many challenges, continue to inspire others and create a sense of community.

We look forward to an enjoyable virtual event that will take place over two days. We hope this event will serve as an opportunity to share resources, increase coordination, and strengthen local families and communities. "My City, My Place" provides an opportunity to recognize individuals outside of the DBHIDS system who consistently provide support to individuals and families with intellectual disabilities/physical challenges.

We want to thank the Philadelphia Intellectual disAbility Public Awareness Nomination Committee for bringing together a group of people to include supporters, presenters, exhibitors, and elected officials. We extend a special thank you to our keynote speakers Philadelphia City Councilmember At- Large, Helen Gym, and Ben Hartfanft, an Advocate and Fundraiser for the Eagles Autism Challenge 2021.

Thank you for joining us. Have an enjoyable experience!

Sincerely

Jill Bowen, PhD

Jill Bowen, PhD
Commissioner

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services
Promoting Recovery, Resilience & Self Determination

Jill Bowen, Ph.D.
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Deputy Commissioner

Sosunmolu Shoyinka, M.D.
Chief Medical Officer

March 5, 2021

Dear Awardees, Families, Friends, and Fellow Philadelphians:

This is my first year partaking in this month-long celebration of disAbility awareness, culminating with our 29th Annual My City, My Place: Brighter Futures Awards. I feel incredibly fortunate to be part of our current activities that are rich in history and tradition.

Our theme for this year is "Sustaining Resilience: Holding on to HOPE!" A few days ago, I came across the following quote, which truly embodies our spirit in this current epoch. "What lies behind us and what lies in before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us" (Ralph Waldo Emerson). This quote epitomizes our community's resilience and our innate ability to surmount the challenges related to the current pandemic. As I am learning more about our community, I have seen each awardee as representing a shining star in our constellation of stars that make up our resilience community. Once again, I am immensely grateful for being able to share it with you.

Great things happen in our community every day, and most of them happen in silence and usually unseen by others. However, we must take the time to recognize and celebrate our collective excellence. While simultaneously trying to improve at both an individual and system-wide level.

Thank you for joining our 29th Annual My City, My Place: Brighter Futures Awards. Let us continue to remain safe while we are caring for each other.

God Bless!

Kleckner J. Charles

Kleckner Charles

Director, DBHIDS

MARCH 25, 2021

DAY 1 PROGRAM

Introduction

Loraine Ballard Morrill

Director of News and Community Affairs

iHeartMedia Philadelphia

Welcome

Jill Bowen, Ph.D.

Commissioner, DBHIDS

Guest Speaker

Helen Gym, Philadelphia Councilmember-at-Large

Philadelphia City Councilmember Helen Gym is a longtime educator and community organizer who is leading a human rights agenda through Philadelphia City Council. Seated in 2016, she has prioritized a healthier city by winning nurses, counselors, music programs, and a pilot program for social workers in every public school. She won compensatory education for students with special needs at several public schools when those schools failed to provide full-time special education teachers. She supports alternatives to policing for those suffering from mental health distress. She helped end suspensions for children in primary grades, closed down youth residential facilities that have abused young people in their care (such as Glen Mills and Devereux), and is now championing a Youth Ombudsperson to support families whose children are in placement or detention. She has also supported accessibility in our city's physical infrastructure, particularly around pedestrian safety and an equitable transportation plan for immigrants, people with disabilities, seniors, and low-income people.

Entertainment

Erica Loury, SpArc

Stretch Break

Spirit Club, Presented by Henry Scheller

29th Annual Brighter Futures

My City, My Place Award Presentations

AWARD WINNERS

Cigna Health Systems, Margo Ling-Staricco - Compassion Career Support Award of Excellence, *Nominated by Gale Williams, Barber National Institute*

Doreatha Davis, Philadelphia Parent Support Group - Civic Engagement Award of Excellence, *Nominated by Amy Millar, Vision for Equality*

Sarah Eberle, Cherry Street Pier (The Delaware Riverfront Corporation) - Business Development Award of Excellence, *Nominated by Lauren Tilghman, KenCrest*

Mary-Grace Gorman, Pennypack Environmental Center - Environmental Award of Excellence, *Nominated by Andrea Consigny, SPIN*

Terrance T. Grey - Self-Advocate Award of Excellence, *Nominated by Alysia Davis, PHMC*

Jamie Mangold, Sesame Place - Inclusion Award of Excellence, *Nominated by Chelsea Lutts, SPIN*

Kimberly McCaffrey, Philadelphia Works, Inc. - Communication Award of Excellence, *Nominated by Susan Schonfeld, Community Integrated Services (CIS)*

OHAAT (One House at a Time): Beds for Kids - Supportive Housing Award of Excellence, *Nominated by Edie Veeck, KenCrest*

Mary Stephens, MD, MPH, Jefferson Health/Continuing Care Program - Innovative Care Award of Excellence, *Nominated by Shane Janick, The Arc of Philadelphia*

Tucker House Nursing Home (Bedrock), Martin Winzack - Elder Care Creativity Award of Excellence, *Nominated by Jackie Prichard, Community Integrated Services (CIS)*

Deb Ungerman - Emotional Award of Excellence, *Nominated by Racheal Townes, Partnership for Community Supports*

29th BRIGHTER FUTURES AWARDS
COMPASSION CAREER SUPPORT
AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

CIGNA CORPORATION

Cigna is a global health service organization based in Bloomfield, Connecticut. Its mission is to improve the health, well-being and peace of mind of those it serves by making health care simple, affordable, and predictable. The company's offerings include an integrated suite of health services, such as medical, dental, behavioral health, pharmacy, vision, supplemental benefits, and other related products. For the first time at their Philadelphia site, Cigna established a new role in its fitness center and hired an adult with intellectual disabilities to work at this facility.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the Philadelphia area, Cigna had to make the ultimate decision to close their offices and shift employees to work from home. Leroy's employment was at risk of being terminated. However, Cigna continued to pay Leroy, an adult with intellectual disabilities, for the next 11 months.

Leroy accepted employment with Cigna in August 2019 at the Philadelphia downtown location as a facility attendant in their Healthy Life Fitness Center. His primary responsibility was keeping the Health and Wellness Fitness Center cleaned and polished, maintaining the locker room, exercise equipment and office area cleaned. This role at Cigna provided Leroy a life of possibilities. At press time, the Philadelphia location remains closed and the timing for reopening is still to be determined.

29th BRIGHTER FUTURES AWARDS
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

DOREATHA DAVIS

Doreatha leads the West Philadelphia Parent Support Group connecting families to what they need most: information, support, and resources. She went out of her way to check on families during this pandemic with calls, emails and even asked for training and help in learning how to use Zoom so she could teach other families how to continue to meet virtually. She provided countless resources to families in need. She inspired the creation of one-page resources on a variety of critical area of needs for families in Philadelphia. Doreatha provides check ins, virtual meetings, and resources to caregivers of people with disabilities and ensures they are all still connected in a socially distant world.

Doreatha has been a long-standing member of the PPSG "family." She joined may years ago seeking support as a parent of a daughter with intellectual disabilities. Over the years she has helped hundreds of families directly navigate the system, become empowered and advocate for their loved ones; all with a smile and kind heart. Families have shared that because of Doreatha, they can access the services needed and have a better life and hope for what she has done for them.

As the pandemic began, Doreatha went into action, calling her families, checking on them and gathering what they needed most: information and connection. Even when she sadly lost her mother and sister within weeks of each other during the pandemic, she still made sure her families had what they needed. She realized families were facing food insecurities at an alarming rate, so she connected them to all the available food pantries. Her efforts inspired the new PPSG Virtual Library for Families, an easy resource of holiday socially distant activities and places to get holiday help. This library continues to be an amazing resource in English and Spanish. Doreatha has ensured that even though information and resources are changing, that families have the latest news on COVID-19, where to get PPE, and insure they have equitable access to vaccine information. She is a true community leader in these challenging times and a great source of hope, encouragement, and resilience for others.

CHERRY STREET PIER No. 9

29th BRIGHTER FUTURES AWARDS BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

SARAH EBERLE

Sarah Eberle is the General Manager of Cherry Street Pier and M. Kofi Smith, is the Event Operations Manager. They have created an inclusive, diverse abilities work environment for Robert who receives Employment support from KenCrest. The Cherry Street Pier is a year-round, mixed use public space on the central Delaware River waterfront. Built into the shell of a century old municipal pier, it reflects Philadelphia today-creative, diverse, historic, adaptable, and inspired. It was design for the community by the community. This space includes artists at work, one of a kind programming, exhibitions, and spaces for reflection.

Sarah and Kofi have created an environment for Robert to do his job independently, successfully; and empowered him in the process. Robert is fully embraced at Cherry Street as just another member of the team. He enjoys the several opportunities to take in the many art exhibits and installations featured at the Pier, as well as the chances to meet new people.

Sarah and Kofi are engaged employers and actively take part in Robert's support plan. They complement KenCrest's values of positive approaches, reaching higher, inclusion, discovery, and excellence. They are exemplary employment partners in Philadelphia.

Cherry Street Pier truly embraces a diverse work environment and understands what it means to partner with organizations like KenCrest to create environments that best supports individuals with disabilities to thrive in their workplaces. During National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) Cherry Street served as an ambassador and shared their great work of cultivating a diverse work environment as part of one of KenCrest's campaigns during NDEAM.

29th BRIGHTER FUTURES AWARDS
ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

MARY-GRACE GORMAN

With the world changing so quickly and drastically this past year, people are isolated at home seeking connection and varied experiences. While SPIN has done our best to provide a variety of virtual experiences, we knew that continued partnerships with our community connections would add additional opportunities for learning and exploration.

People with disabilities often have less access to environmental education and outdoor activity. Prior to the pandemic, Mary-Grace and the Pennypack Environmental Center team reached out to SPIN to make their grounds and walking trails more accessible. This collaboration evolved into guided tours of the grounds, bird watching, trail maintenance, educational events, campfire stories, and education on our local flora and fauna for people in service. When COVID-19 forced us to transition to virtual services, Mary-Grace wanted to continue her involvement and began hosting weekly classes.

People in service were thrilled to see their friend hosting weekly themed discussions. She teaches in a way that is fun and engaging. Her style lends itself to story sharing, asking questions, and encouraging people to view their surroundings in a new and exciting way. Mary-Grace updates topics from suggestions of those who attend her classes. She learns about the people in her classes and tailors her topics to individualized interests and goals. Her topics are relevant to local foliage, wildlife, and the current seasons, so people can take lessons learned to explore their own backyard or neighborhood with a new lens. She has opened her mind to different ways of learning that are accessible to all people and expanded the skills of her team at Pennypack as well.

In these times of isolation and stress, finding joy and excitement in our natural surroundings is essential for all of us. It is even more critical for people with disabilities who have increased health risks and chance of decreased engagement. Mary-Grace is paving the way for the environmental education world to become fully accessible to all citizens and creating new meaningful virtual activities. She is passionate, dedicated and committed to supporting people with disabilities.

29th BRIGHTER FUTURES AWARDS
SELF-ADVOCATE AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

TERRANCE GREY

Terrance is a kind, talented and enthusiastic 26 your old man with intellectual disability. Terrance's magnetic personality and "go getter" attitude inspires everyone around him, especially his peers at his beloved community participation program. He attends the Link Program several days a week and continues to inspire other individuals to reach their personal goals. Within the last year, Terrance has obtained his driver's permit, which he shared with others at the Link. He has encouraged several individuals to also study and not give up until they also obtain their permit.

Terrance is also a standup comedian, who has performed at several venues in Philadelphia. Terrance invites his friends at the Link to his weekly open mic night, which provides a safe and entertaining space for those with disabilities. He has recently taken a leadership role at the Link by designing logos and advertisement material for the group's radio show.

Terrance continues to encourage individuals with disabilities to ignore their fears and reach for life sustaining goals like getting a driver's license, going after a job you want and maintaining supportive friendships. Terrance's entertainment background inspires others to not be side lined, but to be front and center and ahead of the curve. He is currently expanding his entertainment career by working towards designing t-shirts and other memorabilia for his comedy brand.

Terrance is a talented young man and continues to be an inspiration. As he grows, he gives others permission to do the same.

29th BRIGHTER FUTURES AWARDS
INCLUSION AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

JAMIE MANGOLD

Sunny Days, sweepin' the clouds away….in the summer of 2019, Jay Jay found his way to a new job at Sesame Place where the air was sweet and friendly neighbors and coworkers were abundant. He was warmly embraced by his manager Jamie Mangold and the entire Sesame Place team. Jay Jay had extensive work history at Holy Family University but was on a quest to find a summer job to supplement his time off and earn extra money. Jay Jay and his Employment Specialist pursued a job at Sesame Place and the rest is history. From the Human Resources team to the Park Quality Management Team, his coworkers at Sesame Place supported him to learn and grow in his position. They understood his prior work commitment and created a schedule so he could wrap up the school year.

Jamie was instrumental in Jay Jay's onboarding and fostered an inclusive and fun working environment for his team. Jamie offers Jay Jay flexibility regarding his job responsibilities and helps him stay productive even during inclement weather. He sees Jay Jay's full potential and allows him the space and choice about how to best complete his tasks. He has water breaks and mask breaks. When he was not enjoying the afternoon crowds, Jamie shifted him to morning responsibilities. He recognized Jay Jay's work ethic and found ways to adjust his schedule to meet the needs of Jay Jay and Sesame Place.

The whole Sesame Team embraces inclusion of all people. They welcome people from all backgrounds, regardless of age, disability, race, and work experience. Sesame Place is a Certified Autism Center and has created many resources for children and adults with autism and their families. They provide specialized training for staff to support people with autism as well as developing a sensory guide to the park, built quiet rooms and provide noise cancelling headphones to those who need a quiet environment. Jay Jay's coworkers have a better understanding about working alongside someone with different abilities and they value his contributions to his team. Jamie and the Sesame Place team are modeling a truly inclusive work environment rooted in respect of all people.

29th BRIGHTER FUTURES AWARDS
COMMUNICATION AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

KIMBERLY McCAFFREY

As Manager of Youth System at Philadelphia Works, Inc. (PWI), Kim McCaffrey has been a tremendous partner to CIS while helping Philadelphians with disAbilities reach their employment goals. To achieve employment success as adults, youth with disAbilities must have opportunities to explore careers, develop skills, participate in community-based work experiences, and access additional services and supports. Kim understands this fully and has made tremendous efforts to ensure that Philadelphia youth with disAbilities can access these important services through our city's workforce development system.

Kim has made incredible efforts to advance inclusivity in workforce development programs and services as well as directing flexible funding towards CIS to achieve employment outcomes for youth with disAbilities. This has helped hundreds of youth access services, participate in specialized training, and secure competitive employment. She gives them tools and supports they need to choose employment.

PWI is Philadelphia's Workforce Development Board offering career development services to the public. Kim understands that people with disAbilities must have access to the same things in life as those without. She has directed funding to fill in gaps, facilitated collaboration across systems, and pushed toward innovative programming. Kim's leadership has raised the bar for youth with disAbilities, allowing them to reach higher expectations and improved career prospects.

Kim has proven to be an exceptional partner with CIS. Not only has she funded programs and services, but she has also helped CIS become more involved in our city's workforce development system. She has connected with new employers and strategic partners and offered thought leadership that strives for a more inclusive workforce across Philadelphia. Kim has demonstrated unwavering dedication to ensuring that people with disAbilities can access supports to reach their employment goals and live everyday lives.

29th BRIGHTER FUTURES AWARDS SUPPORTIVE HOUSING AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

OHAAT (ONE HOUSE AT A TIME): BEDS FOR KIDS

Beds for Kids partners with social service agencies in Philadelphia and surrounding counties to "end childhood bedlessness." This program provides beds as well as related items (children's books, bedding, pillowcases, toothbrushes, and stuffed animals) to families through agency partners including KenCrest. Caregivers in need of beds for their children work with KenCrest staff to access them. Over the 8 years that KenCrest has partnered with Bed for Kids, 85 children receiving early intervention services have directly benefited. They provided a child's bed to a family who lost a house in a fire, beds to a family for a young adult sleeping on a used bucket seat from an old car, beds to a family sleeping on mats, a bed to a child with Autism who had outgrown a portable crib and on and on.

In 1998 OHATT was created as a furniture bank. Donations of furniture and household items were delivered to low-income fire and flood victims referred by the American Red Cross. The program grew and by 2011 they were furnishing over 200 homes each year. In that year OHAAT shifted their work from furniture bank entirely to Beds for Kids. Since that shift, they now serve over 1500 youth each year.

Many social service agencies in the Philadelphia area help low-income families obtain housing but few can help families turn their housing into functional homes. As a result, children are forced to sleep on the floor, on sofas, or crowded into beds with several family members. These sleeping arrangements often lead to poor sleep, poor health, and poor school performance. Every child in the program receives a new bed, blankets, sheets, pillow, books, toothbrush, and stuffed animal. Families have expressed gratitude not just for the beds, but for the connections made with the volunteers dropping off items. Sleep education is shared as well. This program provides caregivers not only the bed, but information on how to put healthy sleep routines into action.

29th BRIGHTER FUTURES AWARDS
INNOVATIVE CARE AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

MARY STEPHENS, MD, MPH

Dr. Mary Stephens created a family physician practice within Jefferson's newest location at the Navy Yard in South Philadelphia in 2019 to primarily serve people with IDD and their family members. Dr. Stephen's practice provides the community with IDD the choice to visit a healthcare provider that does not just meet ADA requirements in the offices, but excels in accommodating patients with flexible, creative, and assistive care across disciplines. This may be the only family practice of its kind in Philadelphia as well as only a few in the country.

Healthcare providers are not required to receive training on how to promote and practice inclusive medicine and as such people with IDD face social and attitudinal barriers, physical environmental barriers, and even systemic issues involving health insurance barriers for complex diagnosis. Individuals with IDD do not often receive adequate care throughout their lifetimes. This leads to numerous health inequities for the IDD population.

Dr. Stephen's Jefferson Continuing Care Program (JCCP) embodies inclusion in their mission. From the moment the patient visits their office, they may opt to go through the traditional entrance and waiting room or separate waiting room with a less stimulating environment for those with sensory differences or anxiety.

Not only does the practice provide routine primary care, but they assist in coordinating care across disciplines within the Jefferson Health Network. Staff are trained and have experience working with people with IDD. They have enhanced skills with patients with communication differences or who are non-verbal, use vocializations, or use communication devices. Dr. Stephens shapes the skills of future healthcare professionals to have confidence and comfort to provide care to people with IDD. The opportunities for clinical rotations, field placements, residencies and volunteering through JCCP are critical for students and not a requirement for medical schools.

She is a true advocate for individuals with IDD. Her professional work is driven by her personal connection, her daughter. She fully understands the importance of bringing recognition and adoption of inclusive practices in healthcare and provide tangible positive impact for people with IDD.

29th BRIGHTER FUTURES AWARDS
ELDER CARE CREATIVITY AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

TUCKER HOUSE NURSING HOME & REHABILITATION CENTER

Tucker House Nursing and Rehabilitation Center Home provides both short-term post-acute rehabilitation and long-term nursing care. They believe that the crucial ingredient to a healing, wholesome healthcare experience is a personal, homelike environment.

To create this environment, they build a team of employees and treat each one as an individual. They encourage creative thinking in the workplace and allow each employee the ability to make a difference in creative ways. Tucker House supports inclusion by hiring individuals with disabilities and supporting their independence. They are involved with the community through partnerships with local churches and recreation centers.

Martin Winzack is the Director of Activities at Tucker House. He is extraordinary at identifying potential and talent. He has taken an expressed interest in hiring individuals with disabilities, promoting their independence, and creating a more diverse workforce.

29th BRIGHTER FUTURES AWARDS EMOTIONAL AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

DEB UNGERMAN

In August 2020, Patti was in between housing and needed somewhere for her cat, Lucky to go. She didn't want Lucky going to a shelter since she was not sure how long it would take for them to be reunited. Lucky is especially important to Patti and she did not want to lose her. Janet Cooper from PATH employment loves cats and she automatically knew how and who would help. Janet reached out to Deb who fosters cats. Without hesitation, Deb volunteered to foster Lucky until Patti had permanent stable housing.

Janet helped with transporting Lucky to Deb. She secured a donation for supplies, food, and a carrier. By Deb offering her home to Lucky, Patti was able to stay in respite until appropriate housing was located. Deb sent pictures of Lucky to Patti to ensure Patti still felt connected to her pet.

Deb has fostered Lucky since August and has cared for this cat as her own. She provided a loving and safe home. Patti moved into her apartment where she was reunited with Lucky in January. Patti and her pet were delighted to be together once again.

MARCH 26, 2021

DAY 2 PROGRAM

Introduction

Loraine Ballard Morrill

Director of News and Community Affairs

iHeartMedia Philadelphia

Welcome

Kleckner Charles

IDS Director

Guest Speaker

Ben Hartranft

Ben is a 22-year-old young man who was diagnosed with Autism at the age of 2. At that time, he knew only 20 words, and everything was a safety issue. Ben has exceeded all expectations and is strengthened by his faith in God and the people He has placed in Ben's life. He received his diploma from North Penn High School, has several part time jobs (Giant Food Store, Access Services, and Dorney Park) earned his driver's license and treats everyone he meets like a rock star. Ben has had the amazing experience of being the Philadelphia Eagles Autism Challenge Ambassador and the extraordinary opportunity to carry the Lombardi trophy to start the ring ceremony for the Super Bowl Champion Philadelphia Eagles. Ben's dream came true in October 2018 when he was invited to be a guest on the Ellen show and promote Autism Awareness and funding for research. Ben loves being an advocate for Autism Awareness and wants to take awareness into action. Ben's latest endeavor is The Ben and J show (they facilitate discussion about autism awareness with special guests).
The Ben and J Show: https://www.accessservices.org/benandj/

Entertainment

Gloria Mendoza, SAP

Stretch Break

Spirit Club, Presented by Henry Scheller

29th Annual Brighter Futures

My City, My Place Award Presentation

AWARD WINNERS

Alison Andregic - Educational Award of Excellence, *Nominated by Caitlin Laporte, Variety the Children's Charity*

Richard Gilbertie, Brandon, Keith, and Beth DeStefano - Literary Collaboration Award of Excellence, *Nominated by Astrid Cerrada, Partnership for Community Support*

E. Adel Herge, OTD, OTR/L, FAOTA, Jefferson University Hospital - Community Advocate Award of Excellence, *Nominated by Melissa DiSipio, PMHCC*

Eric Kalet, Lowe's Companies - Career Development Award of Excellence, *Nominated by Erin Phovilaychit, Community Integrated Services (CIS)*

Charlie Miller, Art-Reach Philadelphia - Cultural Arts Award of Excellence, *Nominated by Amy Millar, Vision for Equality*

Alice D. Morris - Distinguished Neighbor Award of Excellence, *Nominated by Akilah Witherspoon and Alysia Davis, PHMC*

Vince Naples, Abet Medical Supplies - Equipment for Independence Award of Excellence, *Nominated by Lauren Tilghman, KenCrest*

Kathy Neumeister, Drexel University, Holy Family University, LaSalle University - Community Leadership Award of Excellence, *Nominated by Antoinette Hinkle, Nicole Burns, Laura Silsby, SPIN*

Sharon Snyder, Kisses For Kyle - Financial Award of Excellence, *Nominated by Ruth Fell and Kathy Lilly, Partnership for Community Supports*

Hannes Viljoen, Brain Child Fund International (BFC) - Spiritual Award of Excellence, *Nominated by Jana Viljoen aka Ziya, Brain Child Fund International*

Ryan Weinsheimer and Staff, WAWA - Corporate Appreciation Award of Excellence, *Nominated by Andrea Lowe, PATH*

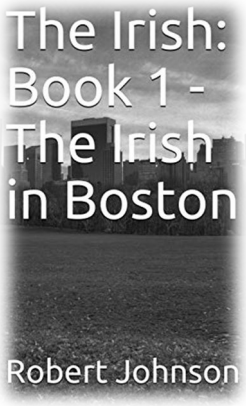
29th BRIGHTER FUTURES AWARDS
EDUCATIONAL AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

ALISON ANDREGIC

Alison is an occupational therapist by trade and spends her days helping young children develop the skills and abilities to participate in activities that engage them. Her practice is person-centered and focused on helping to give children a greater ability to participate in everyday life. Without Alison's supportive skill building, children would not be able to engage in daily life or participate in school.

Outside of Alison's work as an occupational therapist, she also works as a university preceptor helping to prepare students for the world around them. While in this role, Alison worked with students who were placed at Variety-The Children's Charity. Variety-The Children's Charity of Greater Philadelphia is an organization that serves children with disabilities throughout the five-county Philadelphia area, Southern Jersey, and Delaware. When she heard that Variety would be dropping off gifts to children in need in the Philadelphia area, she immediately sprang into action. She offered her personal time and connections to tap into her network of colleagues to identify more children that they support. Alison volunteered to pick up and deliver the gifts across the city of Philadelphia.

Additionally, Alison saw this as a teaching opportunity and recruited one of the fieldwork students to join her. This is just one example of many of Alison donating her time and talent at a moment's notice to help others.



29th BRIGHTER FUTURES AWARDS
LITERARY COLLABORATION AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

RICHARD GILBERTIE, BRANDON DeSTEFANO, BETH ANN CORR, KEITH DeSTEFANO

What does "It's All About Community!" really mean? Is it a concept or a way of life? A neighborhood in Philly shows us that maybe a community is really what it's all about!

Bobby is a polite young man with a radiant personality. He gets along well with all his neighbors. A neighbor, Richard Gilbertie has been a friend of Bobby's and his parents for years. Due to financial reasons Bobby's parents needed to move to Georgia, but Bobby did not want to move. Richard invited Bobby to live with him and Bobby accepted. Richard helps Bobby with meal preparations, scheduling medical appointments, ensuring that Bobby's needs are met and keeping Bobby in touch with his parents. Ricard is hoping to become a LifeSharing provider and Bobby is very happy living with Richard.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic and the mandated quarantine, Bobby was working in the stock room at Dollar Tree. The quarantine resulted in Bobby not working and missing his place of employment. So, to address the boredom, Richard suggested to Bobby that he write stories and Bobby did! To date, Bobby has written 34 books!

One book called "The Irish in Boston" caught the interest of Bobby's friend Brandon, another neighbor. Brandon edited the book and Brandon's parents, Keith and Beth DeStefano assisted Bobby and their son Brandon to get the book published on Kindle. Bobby and Brandon are published authors.

During these difficult months of COVID-19 challenges, quarantine, and job loss we see hope in the kindness and joy of helping each other. Richard, Brandon, Keith, and Beth have offered Bobby an extended family. It is exciting to look at this wonderful group of neighbors for this year's Brighter Futures Award because it is not only all about community, but also about resiliency, creativity, and the hope for a brighter future.

The link to the book is-https://www.amazon.com/Irish-Book-Boston-ebook/dp/B08SB7B8TV

29th BRIGHTER FUTURES AWARDS
COMMUNITY ADVOCATE AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

E. ADEL HERGE

As individuals with intellectual disabilities live longer than ever before and acquire the normal aging issues just like the typical population, Dr. Adel Herge from Jefferson University Department of Occupational Therapy has always been at the ready to train, support, and service the ID population. She has adapted her training and service to include ID and Autism in everything she does. She makes sure that ID patients receive direct occupational therapy services through the Jefferson Elder Care Program. She is certified to provide Skills2Care-ID, a program for caregivers to help manage the challenge of supporting individuals with ID and dementia. She is a member of the National Task Group on Intellectual Disabilities and Dementia Practices since 2012 and is a member of the Board of Directors.

Dr. Herge has presented in many state and local professional venues on topics related to ID and occupational therapy practice. She has authored several book chapters on the role of occupational therapy with adults and aging adults with ID. She helped develop the first OT Doctorate Program at Jefferson and made sure PCHC was one of the Fellowship sites that students could utilize to gain experience about the ID population. This was a great collaboration to enable student's first-hand knowledge and participation with providers in the field.

Dr. Herge has continuously been a long-standing advocate, educator, and health professional in the field, servicing the needs of intellectual and developmental disabilities for over 20 years. PCHC can always count on Adel to present educational trainings or consult with providers or families about specific individuals who are aging or who are struggling with OT issues. She works closely with agency nurses to help rectify any insurance issues and make sure the individual gets any service or equipment needed. Adel goes above and beyond to support the team and responds in a very timely manner. Her knowledge and service are extremely valuable in our community.

29th BRIGHTER FUTURES AWARDS
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

ERIC KALET

Since first connecting with CIS two years ago, Eric has been a tireless advocate and supporter of our participants, helping connect them to employment opportunities at Lowe's stores throughout Philadelphia. He has helped CIS participants make choices in their lives by showing them that more opportunities are available than they might have known. He participated in CIS-led panels with local high school students, where he has given them insight into different kinds of career opportunities available at Lowe's and helped them think through and articulate their own employment hopes and goals. He has helped them broaden their choices by guiding them to see their own skills and how these skills can translate practically to different kinds of roles in professional environments. As a partner with CIS, he has assisted a significant number of individuals find jobs at various Lowe's locations. Eric is a vocal and proactive advocate hiring, training, and retaining neurodiverse staff, reaching out to, and partnering with organizations like CIS and the PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Eric is also an amazing internal advocate at Lowe's for the disAbility community, emphasizing the importance of a diverse workplace and helping our participants find and thrive in meaningful jobs. He connects them to Lowe's "Track to the Trades" program. In partnership with adult education provider Guild Education, this program provides a pathway to higher-paying, meaningful employment in the skilled trades by giving up-front tuition funding to take online training courses in carpentry, HVAC, electrical, plumbing and appliance repair. These programs broaden the career possibilities for our participants and gives them an opening to new skills.

This extraordinary man approaches his work with an eagerness to listen and learn about the different people CIS supports and how best to be the support they need in the workplace. He is a great connector, partnering with OVR to post jobs, and collaborating with us in our relationships with Philadelphia schools connecting students to internships and job opportunities. He creates a supportive company culture that has given our participants opportunities to be successful.

29th BRIGHTER FUTURES AWARDS
CULTURAL ARTS AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

CHARLIE MILLER

Charlie Miller is the Director of Strategic Partnerships for Art-Reach Philadelphia. He partnered with Vision for Equality to offer a bi-lingual family fun night. This helped families enjoy a great evening while learning how to take advantage of the Art-Reach program and enjoy the cultural arts of Philadelphia with their ACCESS card. It was one of the last in-person outreaches for both organizations when the pandemic hit. The night brought joy and information to many families. During the pandemic, Charlie worked with his dedicated team to find creative solutions to ensure families still got to enjoy the arts by transitioning their efforts virtually and working with community partners.

Art-Reach removes the financial barrier to arts engagement for the disability community and people with low income. Art-Reach creates, advocates for, and expands accessible opportunities in the arts so the full spectrum of society is served. In February 2021, they relaunched their STAMPS program following the safety guidelines of the city to ensure that students are still connected to self-directed learning and cultural arts.

Additionally, in response to COVID-19, Art-Reach created a new program, ENCORE at Home, where digital content is created in partnership with arts organizations to build accessibility awareness, appreciation for, and engagement in the arts and culture from the safety of your own homes. Each video is verbally described by the featured arts partner, ASL interpreted by HandsUP Productions, and captioned. They will be updated to the website as they are launched. Participants can enjoy "visiting" museums, learning exclusive stories about their collections, dancing, and following along to art-making activities.

The Annual Flower show will be held in June and include sensory friendly events in a socially distant world. Art-Reach will provide a sensory friendly and socially distant art program at the upcoming flower show. Art-Reach will continue to provide safe, accessible, and inclusive opportunities to our community. Charlie and his dedicated team have made sure that even in a pandemic, the arts are accessible to all people here in Philadelphia and beyond.

29th BRIGHTER FUTURES AWARDS
DISTINGUISHED NEIGHBOR AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

ALICE D. MORRIS

"Serve Your Neighbor as You Would Serve Yourself." This Proverb would apply to Ms. Alice Morris who has served James for several decades. Alice is a long standing, well respected West Philadelphia resident and lives next door to James. She has always looked out for James and even more so after the passing of both of his parents. She has been a vital part of his community of support making sure that his decisions are his own and not those that are influenced by others who want to take advantage of him. Ms. Alice is an active member of his Supports Coordination; ensuring that health and safety concerns are clearly expressed and mitigated. She checks on his doctor appointments and medications. She assists with the organization of his documents and bill deadlines. Her efforts have helped James maintain his independence as well as his cherished family home. When James was diagnosed with COVID-19 and hospitalized, Ms. Alice jumped into action once again when he was discharged with groceries, cooked meals, medication delivery and all with care and kindness.

Most recently, Ms. Alice assisted James and the Supports Coordinator with home repair projects. She coordinated multiple contractors to ensure that the project estimates were submitted to the Supports Coordination Organization for payment. She assisted James with decisions that guaranteed his safety and independence.

Despite being retired and having a family of her own, Ms. Alice is dedicated to helping James and his family. Her large heart has made an even bigger impact to those around her. In James own words he describes Ms. Alice. "You are the best neighbor I have. You have done so much for me and I want you to know that this award is also from me because you help me so much!"

29th BRIGHTER FUTURES AWARDS
EQUIPMENT FOR INDEPENDENCE AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

VINCE NAPLES

Vince has been a longstanding community partner for over 30 years, who is very accessible beyond the work he gets paid to do. He is truly knowledgeable in his field of adaptive devices. He knows, supports, and enables individuals with disabilities not only for KenCrest but for the Greater Philadelphia region. Vince treats all with dignity and respect. He solves problems to ensure safety is a priority, and then uses innovative ideas to get the best equipment possible so the individuals he supports can have freedom to do what they like.

Vince considers many possibilities when assessing an individual for adaptive devices. He considers a wheelchair with rugged wheels when he learns someone loves going out in their community. He uses specialized footrests for someone with brittle bones and thinks of how best to protect legs and feet from any accidental impact. He plans on lateral supports for a wheelchair to ensure upright positioning while being assisted in vehicles. He does this all with safety and promotion of further independence in mind. Vince, along with the individual and support personnel discuss what is the best for more independence.

Vince's services include training to new equipment, installing and recommending Omni lift systems, and barrier free systems to ease the staff having to lift and transfer individuals who need daily assistance. He takes time to explore what makes sense for the individual. Vince is a great resource for questions at any time. He works on creative ideas and addresses roadblocks with equipment. His team provides "in home visits" for wheelchair repairs or visiting individuals to address issues on site.

Vince is a person, who for many years, has done the right thing by giving back to others. It is that simple! He is humble and believes his work gives individuals with adaptive needs a better life by providing this service. He is a community partner who sees the vision and puts it into action.

29th BRIGHTER FUTURES AWARDS
COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

KATHY NEUMEISTER

Kathy has been an amazing advocate and support to SPIN for over seven years. She is a clinical nursing supervisor who teaches nursing students through Holy Family, LaSalle, and Drexel University. As part of their learning experience, she has developed a program where her students spend time volunteering with SPIN. They have opportunities to spend time in group homes and in children's programs. This allows them to have hands on experience to care and interact with individuals with intellectual, developmental, and autism spectrum disabilities when they begin their professions as nurses. Kathy is a leader in identifying strategies to teach the students to identify prominent health concerns and work on community teaching to our staff and individuals to have higher outcomes in health.

Kathy applies a holistic approach to all interactions and believes and advocates for the well-being in every aspect of a person's life. As a member of the SPIN Dream Team, she encourages healthy lifestyle habits by promoting drinking water, relaxation, eating healthy, awareness of health risks, and moving your body. She ensures that these core values are understood by her students and teaches them that it is not just the physical health of individuals, but also their emotional and spiritual well-being. She works with her nursing students to support healthy habits: washing hands, coughing and sneezing properly and keeping the spread of germs to a minimum. This has been extremely important during this Pandemic. She educated all in their part of infection control and comforted the fears and anxiety by providing vital information. She encouraged her students to utilize technology (FaceTime, IPads, Zoom) to connect with individuals and staff to ensure inclusion.

Kathy displays her extraordinary traits in all interactions with individuals, staff, and family members and all with a huge smile on her face. She is a positive and energetic influence on everyone she meets. Her kindness, compassion, and dedication are wonderful examples to all.

29th BRIGHTER FUTURES AWARDS
FINANCIAL AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

SHARON SNYDER

The Early Intervention and Infant Toddler not only serves children who may need just a little help to catch up developmentally to their age-appropriate levels, but sadly sometimes also serve families who experience a childhood cancer diagnosis. When a family is served with this diagnosis, we immediately connect them with Sharon Snyder and Kisses For Kyle.

Ms. Snyder began Kisses For Kyle in 2001 following the 1998 passing of her son, Kyle, from Leukemia. Kisses For Kyle has grown over the last 19 years to have many programs that benefit children and their families. They support families by providing monetary support, meals, holiday meals and gifts, sporting event tickets, concerts, beach days and so much more. Kisses For Kyle recognizes the value of the family and the supports they provide are not just for the child affected but the entire family.

We have provided information to families in the Early Intervention program whose children are battling cancer. The connection has been great for one of our families where Kisses For Kyle provided support after their daughter was diagnosed with AML Leukemia at 16 months of age. They provided a network of support for by offering recreational opportunities, Thanksgiving basket meal, school supplies for older siblings and gifts for the entire family during the holiday season. The help this program provides alleviates some stress when so much time is focused on cancer treatment and hospital stays. This family unfortunately lost their daughter in September 2020, however, Kisses For Kyle continues to be very present in their lives and the family continues to be active members in the Kisses For Kyle community.

29th BRIGHTER FUTURES AWARDS
SPIRITUAL AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

HANNES VILJOEN

Hannes Viljoen is the co-founder and director of Brain Child Fund International (BCF) and he volunteers full time to help families with special needs children through programs that support them holistically in different areas of their lives (emotional, spiritual, educational). Hannes is a dedicated father of four children, 3 of whom have special needs (his eldest daughter had a pediatric stroke, the second born was diagnosed with Down Syndrome & Autism, and his third son has Autism while his 4th child is neuro typical). As a parent of special needs children, he believes that one of the most important things one can do for individuals with special needs is to support their parents and caregivers to ensure that they themselves are okay so they in turn can provide a safe and optimal environment for the ones in their care.

During the pandemic, Hannes lead his team who designed programs that started in 2020 and continues to support the special needs community. These programs include simulcasts designed to help special needs families thrive through holding space for special conversations that provided emotional and spiritual support to cope with all the stress and anxiety. The BCF education series supports families through relevant education on relevant topics presented by various professionals in the field. Kilos for Kids was an initiative to inspire individuals to accumulate distances to raise awareness and funds through cycling, running, swimming, walking and some special needs children crawled. Young and old from 6 countries participated.

Behind the scenes or on stage, whether he is at home working on his knees with his own son, or advocating during an international talk on stage, love and compassion lives in the heart of Hannes. Helping special needs families is not something he does or a career choice, it literally is who he is.

29th BRIGHTER FUTURES AWARDS CORPORATE APPRECIATION AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

RYAN WEINSHEIMER & 4 STAFF-WAWA

A PATH individual, Elizabeth, has been working in Ryan's Wawa for 25 years. Every morning that they are working together he makes sure he greets her and asks how she is doing. He tells her that she's doing a great job making the coffee. Ryan allows Elizabeth to run the coffee area as she likes because he trusts that she can do it. She decides when it's ready to clean the Cappuccino machine and Ryan gives her the flexibility to make the right decisions. His faith in Elizabeth is apparent for all other tasks required during her shift.

Ryan is the manager at the Wawa on Oxford Avenue. He encourages other individuals to visit his store and do work trials to see if they like working at Wawa. This helps job coaches examine the skills of the individuals as well as their preferences for a work environment.

During the pandemic Wawa had many challenges. At one point in March when the store was told to close, Ryan had all the food that needed to be discarded. He made a care package to bring to Elizabeth's home. He couldn't reach the family so pursued other ways of connecting until he was able to deliver the food directly to Elizabeth's door. Later in the year, it was Elizabeth's 25th Anniversary at Wawa. Due to other closures associated with the turbulence this summer, Elizabeth's celebration was postponed. As things calmed down in November, Ryan ordered 2 cakes and printed signs for this celebration. Balloons were ordered and surrounded the coffee counter. A beautiful floral headpiece was placed on Elizabeth which she wore proudly. Then the best surprise was unwrapped. They had a black hoodie printed with the Wawa Goose and her name with 25 years written on it in pink glitter. Elizabeth was so surprised that Ryan and her co-workers had planned such a fabulous day even with so many obstacles in front of them.

Thanks to our exhibitors!

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https://dbhids.org/about/organization/strategic-planning-division/

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Ben Hartranft
Website: https://benergy1.wordpress.com/

The Ben and J
Show: https://www.accessservices.org/benandj/

Special thanks to all Nominators for their outstanding nominations!

Department of Behavioral Health
Intellectual disAbility Services
wishes to thank
Our keynote speakers: Helen Gym, Ben Hartranft
Our entertainers: Erica Loury, Gloria Mendoza
IDS Public Awareness Committee
Loraine Ballard Morrill, Mistress of Ceremonies
Bonnie Squires, Publicity
Andrea Imperatore, Meeting Planner
Wendy Williams, IDS Advisor and Coordinator

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Wendy Williams, IDS Advisor and Coordinator

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