

Briefly Speaking | Employment - A Message from Barbara Faron
Have you ever thought about how meaningful work can be?



For many, employment is not only a paycheck, although that certainly helps and can open doors to other opportunities. But gainful employment also gives many people purpose. Going to work everyday increases motivation and engagement and also empowers people. It gives many a reason to get up, put themselves together, and be somewhere where other's count on them. Fulfilling responsibilities successfully can increase one's own sense of accomplishment.

Federation of Organizations offers a variety of employment and volunteer options and has benefited through the years from the input of participants in program development and operation. It is important to remember that "employment" can mean different things. People need options when developing employment goals. Gainful employment is what we think of first. Some people will move to full-time employment and integrate into the regular workforce. Others will find that part-time work meets their needs. While it is true that financial gain is an important work incentive, there are other options to be considered which are "gainful" in similar ways. Often, volunteer roles help build skills and confidence and provide the satisfaction of engaging in meaningful activity, benefiting the larger community, working with others, and affirming the value of one's life experience.

Since 1977, Federation has been offering employment and volunteer opportunities for people with special needs. We started the Foster Grandparent Program in Suffolk County and "employed" low-income seniors as volunteers to work with children at risk in schools and other settings. The particular focus of the program at first was children in psychiatric hospitals. The program has grown and diversified its placements with seniors serving as Foster Grandparents in elementary schools, day cares, and Head Starts.

Shortly after that program began, Federation began to employ people in recovery from mental illness to provide peer support to others working on recovery. Back then, we recruited people over 65 with long-term histories of psychiatric hospitalization living in adult homes in western Suffolk County to become Senior Companions. We looked at people's strengths, not their diagnosis or disability. The Senior Companion Program is a national program created under the Older Americans Act and Federation was the local sponsor in Suffolk County. Qualifying seniors receive a stipend (which may not be considered income under Federal law) and other benefits. They provide a variety of peer support services to seniors who may be considered high-needs.. The program has since expanded to provide services to homebound and frail elderly seniors in the larger community. Through the years, Federation has integrated peer workers into all of its programs in a variety of roles, and many individuals move on to jobs within the organization which are not specifically directed to people in recovery.

In 2011, Federation teamed up with the outpatient pediatric clinic system of Stony Brook University Medical Center to provide another avenue of peer support and employment in the form of Community Health Workers (CHW). These staff members go into the community and support at-risk families in caring for their children with chronic health conditions or other risk factors such as homelessness, foster care placement, etc. CHWs are screened and trained community members who provide assistance in negotiating all aspects of the healthcare and service delivery system. They make home visits, help coordinate and follow-up on doctor's appointments, answer questions about vaccines, provide reliable health and wellness information, and connect families to other resources within Stony Brook Medicine.

At Federation, people receive support and encouragement in identifying and pursuing their employment goals in so many different ways. We offer a variety of employment options whereby someone can explore the larger community, work with other people, and engage in meaningful activities. Whether working full-time or part-time or as a volunteer, people have the opportunity to develop their skills and confidence while engaging in productive, meaningful activity and moving toward a more independent and fulfilling life.

In this issue, we provide a snippet of the success stories we hear every day. These stories serve as motivation and proof that everyone deserves to engage in a meaningful life, and we can help them get there.

Sincerely,

Barbara Faron | Chief Executive Officer

The Many Faces of Employment

Employment can be an important piece of the puzzle when it comes to recovery. Whether it is a connection to community, financial security, independence, or greater self-esteem, there are many benefits of having a job.

Federation of Organization's Employment Specialists helps clients at every stage of recovery. This includes assisting with creating resumes, conducting job searches, completing job applications, and preparing for interviews. Employment Specialists work directly with the clients to further discover their strengths and interests and how it can be applied to gaining meaningful employment. Another aspect is job development where Employment Specialists connect with the community and potential employers. Once employed, members are provided additional support to further learn to manage their symptoms while at work and form positive working relationships. Members may also benefit from learning to advocate for certain accommodations that will help them be successful in the workforce.

In this newsletter, we feature profiles of individuals who have agreed to share their motivations and experiences regarding employment. You'll also read about Peer Specialists. The peer relationship is very special and has long been an integral part of Federation of Organizations. Peer Specialists have an important and unique role in the recovery process. They may share their own stories of recovery while providing support and inspiration to current members to further assist them with achieving their goals.

While each person's journey is unique, what is universal is that employment – whether part-time, full-time, or as a Peer – can add purpose and meaning to life.

When One PROS Closes, a More Robust PROS Opens

The adage about one door closing and another opening could well be applied to Federation's Personalized Recovery Oriented Services (PROS) programs.

On February 12, the PROS program in West Babylon closed its doors. A new door opened to a modern, refurbished building in Copiague, which will serve as one setting for Recovery Concepts West.

By merging the West Babylon and Copiague programs into one program – now housed at the Akron Community Center – Federation is able to offer more programs and services.

"We are now able to provide more robust services with an increased number of staff members," said Jason Vandewater, Director of Clinical Services.

Recovery Concepts West will service all 140 clients and will allow for more specialized groups. Previously, the two sites each serviced 70 clients and the programs were too small to be sustaining.

As transitions go, the move was closeto seamless. No clients had to change doctors or health care providers. In fact, the clinic days, when doctors are on site, have increased from one to two days a week.

By merging the PROS programs into one building, there will be greater opportunities for more group topics to help individuals work toward personal goals and avoid relapse from mental health symptoms and substances.

Vandewater said that the model for Recovery Concepts West is based on the well-run, successful Patchogue program.

We asked clients what they think of the modern space, with its gleaming new computers and smartphones, and its abundance of programs and services. Here are a few of the responses:

"It's welcoming . . . there's more socializing . . . and I'm getting to meet new people." Kathryn R.

"I feel great about it, everyone gets along. There are more people to talk to." Orville G.

"I feel good about it. I feel having more clients are good. It's a blessing. Clients are sharing and being supportive. Staff and interns are knowledgeable." Julius V.

Peer Specialist Jean Santiago Offers Hope to Others

Part of the job of being a Peer Specialist is the ability to share your own experiences with individuals who are in recovery.

Jean Santiago, a Peer Specialist with Federation, has no reservation about talking openly about her journey to sobriety. At age 66, she has been sober for 33 years. Her goal is to help people move forward and to impress upon others that "there's hope."

Jean has been employed by Federation since 2007, when she began working on an ACT team, which involved interacting with residents in crisis. As the years followed, she took on many other jobs at Federation and in 2016 earned her Peer Certification from New York State.



"I love working at Federation, I love working with the residents, and I wanted to be recognized with certification," Jean said.

Deborah Manwaring, Program Manager at Federation's IBR, 6th Street, and Sunken Meadow Residences, considers Jean to be a "role model" to people who reside with Federation.

"She's empathetic and uses motivational modeling," Manwaring said. "By sharing her own experiences, she helps assure the residents that she wants the best for them and they are very fond of her."

Manwaring concluded: "Jean just wants to help everyone succeed." That, indeed, is the true mark of a Peer Specialist.

Work Gives Derek N. a New Purpose

When Derek N. began working at ShopRite in Hauppauge, it was a turning point. "It has given him a purpose," said Arline Pierre-Louis, Housing Case Manager. Derek uses the extra money he earns to travel to Florida to visit his nine-year-old son.

In 2013, Derek turned to Federation. He was struggling with anger management issues and having trouble paying his rent. Then Derek's son ended up moving to Florida. The move devastated Derek, who used to stay home as much as possible to take care of him.

Pierre-Louis encouraged Derek to look for a job. She also helped him work on skills such as listening well and respecting others. After a three-month search, Derek landed a part-time job in the deli section of ShopRite. The job has changed his entire perspective.

"He's so happy," Pierre-Louis said. "He has a purpose. He now knows that he can provide for his son if he should need/want something. Derek has truly come a long way."

Girl Scouts Bring Cheer Patchogue Community Center

Two beautifully painted planters with rainbows and smiley faces now grace the entrance of the Patchogue Community Center, thanks to Girl Scout Troop 3116, which is affiliated with Canaan Elementary School in Patchogue.

The Girl Scouts also painted a bench in off-white, punctuated with pastel-colored handprints. The planters and bench are part of the troop's volunteer effort to make a difference in the community.

It all started when two Girl Scout leaders – Lisa and Jackie – walked into the Center last year and asked about helping out.

Their first project was initiating a food drive where they collected 30 bags of food for the food pantry!

Next, the Girl Scouts decided to beautify the Patchogue Community Center, and that's when the idea of painting the donated planters and bench came forth.

"The people who visit Patchogue Community Center love it," said Joanne Bentivegna, a Program Manager at Federation. "The Girl Scouts really formed a connection with us, and it helps bring the whole community together."



Dominic S. Finds Housing, Stability, and Work Are Keys to Independence

When Dominic S. came to Federation in September 2016, he was struggling with symptoms, not taking any medication, and not working.

After a year in temporary housing, Dominic was staying on course with therapy, compliant with medication, and his symptoms were stable. His motivation helped him make the move from a CR/SRO program to Supported Housing and independent living.

Now in 2018, employment is part of the picture as Dominic works at ShopRite.

Margie Licari, Rehabilitative Associate, said that Dominic, age 26, is a shining example of a person who has embraced independence. She said that he has a social life with friends and has even discovered that art is a good outlet for reducing stress. He particularly enjoys working with chalk and creating portraits.

"Dominic has a good attitude, is positive, and is motivated to move forward," Licari said.

With a Little Planning, Aurora L. Finds Joy in Life Again

For Aurora L., 55, working five days a week in the office of a legal consultant is something that brings personal satisfaction and keeps her connected to the community. With her earnings, she is saving up to buy a car to drive to work.

Aurora's outgoing, independent personality bears little resemblance to a period in 2013 following her divorce. At that time, suffering from severe depression and anxiety, she moved to Federation's 6th Street residence.

Particularly painful were moments when she was apart from her two children. After a plan was put into place for visits and conversations, her anxiety eased. Her son, 23, and her daughter, 26, call her every day on the phone, and she sees them on weekends.

For the family-oriented Aurora, life is now filled with shopping, eating lunch with co-workers, and socializing. And soon she'll likely be driving her own car back and forth to work!

Update: Aurora recently moved into Federation's Supportive Housing and bought the car she's been saving for!

Agripino A. Sets His Sights on a Peer Position

Agripino A. has turned his life around and wants to be a source of support to others.

In 2014, after being in the hospital and in a psychiatric program, Agripino moved to Federation's 6th Street residence.

It was a slow journey to overcome reservations and come out of his shell. Although he was a husband and father of two, he was reluctant to speak about his life. Slowly, he began taking pride in his appearance. His social skills improved. He began setting goals, keeping a journal, and writing down what he wants to accomplish.

Today, Agripino volunteers three times a week in a cafeteria, where he serves food. He maintains his own apartment and cooks his own meals. Equally important, he focuses on goals. Most recently, he achieved one of his major goals by completing a Peer Specialist program.

Next on the list is securing a Peer position. There's no doubt that when Agripino sets out to accomplish something, he will achieve it.

After Loss, Marie L. Discovers that Life Is Good Again

As she speaks about her experience with Federation, Marie L. is downright enthusiastic.

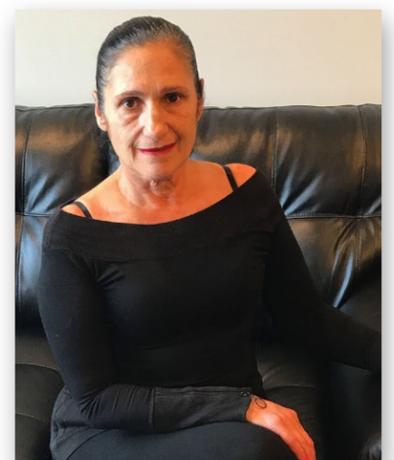
"Stephanie Jones was great," said Marie, referring to Program Supervisor who helped Marie apply for Single Point of Access (SPA) Housing, which resulted in her moving to a brand new, furnished apartment. "This place I'm in now? It's fantastic."

Marie, 61, who has a mental health diagnosis, turned to Federation in September 2017 after couch surfing in the homes of friends following the unexpected death of her husband. Unable to afford their two-bedroom apartment, she had little income of her own and had to give up her apartment.

"It feels good to be on my own now," said Marie, who has a case manager, attends program, and is taking steps to get her life back on track.

"Federation helped a lot," she said. "They were very supportive. Now I spend time with my family and friends. I have a roommate. It worked out well."

Marie's experience from loss to recovery is best expressed in her own words: "I love it. Life is good."



*Senior Volunteer
Recognition Luncheon*

JUNE 8, 2018
12:00 PM - 3:00 PM

GUEST SPEAKER	MAN OF THE YEAR
	
Tom Cilmi Legislator Suffolk County	Chad A. Lupinacci Huntington Town Supervisor

Luncheon to Follow

Kindly **RSVP** by
Thursday, May 31, 2018

For more information, please call (631) 669-5355, ext. 1106
or please visit our website at www.fedoforg.org.

Lynn Ricci Marks 30 Years with Federation

This past February, Lynn Ricci celebrated her 30th anniversary with Federation of Organizations.

Colleagues gathered on her anniversary day to celebrate this wonderful milestone!

We thank Lynn for her dedicated service and hard work over the years. She is a valued member of the Federation team, and we wish her continued success!





Federation of Organizations Congratulates Staff Members on Recent Accomplishments:

- **Eric Schatzel** promoted to Associate Director
- **Kelly Rogan** earned her RN license

Main Office
One Farmingdale Road - West Babylon, NY 11704
P: 631-669-5355
www.fedoforg.org