

Quarterly Newsletter | September 2018



Welcome to our new and improved newsletter!

We've streamlined our newsletter to make it easier to read! We hope you enjoy the new layout! If you have any questions or comments about the new design, feel free to email us at info@fedoforg.org. We'd love to hear your thoughts!

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The Many Measures of Success

A Message from Philip Matcovsky
Chief Operating Officer, Federation of Organizations

What does success mean to the population we serve at Federation of Organizations? There are as many definitions of success as there are clients. Ultimately, success is defined by the clients themselves. Our job is to offer help and support every step of the way, including during setbacks on the road to recovery.



Here are two very different stories that show that whether it's a drive around the block or starting a business, each client's path to success is unique.

Leaving the house for a doctor visit was a challenge for Lucy who had agoraphobia. We first worked to address her medical issues via telemedicine. We followed up with home visits by a therapist, a nurse, and a support team.

When Lucy received an invitation to a dinner at which her son would receive an award for his work, she faced a huge challenge: Buying a new dress. She expressed the desire to shop at a major department store. Leaving the house was challenging for Lucy, but she has so far managed to take a ride around the block. Supporting Lucy, as she stepped into the car and took that ride, was exciting for staff; for Lucy, the trip marked a milestone. Everyone is hopeful that the dress will be purchased very soon.

Finding a job was the goal of another client, Fred. Trapped in the revolving door of prison and release, drug addiction and mental illness were preventing his success. Our team put measures in place with Fred to address his challenges. Then, we worked with him to get enrolled in training for a career that he was passionate about.

There were stumbling blocks to overcome, but our team helped keep him focused on success. With study and practice, he passed a required exam that allowed him to set up his own business. Persistence and positive attitude were instrumental for Fred as he reached his goal. Today, he is able to lead an independent and fulfilling life.

Insurance companies view mental health conditions as medical conditions, much like a broken leg. The cast comes off, the patient goes to physical therapy – and voila! – the patient walks successfully again.

Health insurance companies sometimes question whether our interventions and supports are working effectively. But those who work with individuals with psychiatric disorders understand that progress doesn't happen in a linear fashion. Pitfalls, such as stressful events, may cause people to regress in their recovery.

At Federation of Organizations, we strive to help each person achieve success, whether it's a drive around the block or finding a new career. For us, supporting our clients in making progress in their recovery is our goal and our privilege.

Residents Take to the Stage at Open Mic Night

From poetry to journal entries to songs, Open Mic Night provided an opportunity for clients at 6th Street Residence to discover how good it felt to say their words out loud.

“It's very therapeutic for our clients to express what they're feeling,” said Joe Pilla, Program Supervisor at the Frank Padavan 6th Street Residence. “It's one thing to write feelings in a journal, but when they express things out loud to their peers, they no longer feel so alone.”

Open Mic Night, held on the evening of June 20th, was the brainchild of David Gerges, a Rehabilitative Associate. Gerges saw a connection between the Coping Skills class he leads and the potentially therapeutic benefits of reading written words out loud.

Audience members reported that they could relate to many of the feelings expressed by participants on stage.

Given the warm reception of the inaugural event, Open Mic Night may become a regular monthly series beginning in the fall.

**At Sunken Meadow Residence, Recognition
Is a Powerful Motivator**

When Federation staff started a “Resident-of-the-Month” program at the Sunken Meadow Residence in April, they had no idea it would get such a positive response.

“People have absolutely responded to the program,” said Tisha Silvera, Behavioral Specialist with Federation. “Many residents are showing improvements in their behaviors and changing the way they interact with others.”

The program was started to “motivate the residents and make them feel good about themselves and to give them a sense of purpose,” Silvera said.

Positive reinforcement such as recognition has been shown to motivate people to improve behavioral patterns and facilitate change. To help guide the selection for the Resident-of-the-Month, Federation staff carefully crafted parameters that would help to serve as a guide. These include:

- Compliance with treatment programs
- Refraining from smoking
- Attending appointments or day hab programs, as applicable
- Maintaining a living environment and upkeep with personal hygiene
- Being respectful to peers and staff

The Resident-of-the-Month receives an Award Certificate, a \$10 food voucher, the ability to decide on one community trip, and free coffee or soda at the award ceremony!

Meet Pauline M., Resident of the Month, April 2018.

Pauline M., a Sunken Meadow resident since 2012, is known for her sweet and pleasant personality. Nearly always smiling, Pauline enjoys singing, especially “Over the Rainbow.” She attends day program at WellLife five days a week, as well as some group meetings at the residence.

Selecting Pauline as the program’s first Resident-of-the-Month was not a hard decision for staff. Pauline easily meets all the criteria by which the winners are selected and is an all around pleasure for staff and peers to work with. Congratulations Pauline! Way to go!

From Weight Loss to Lower Blood Pressure, Federation’s Healthy Lifestyles Initiative Brings Rewards



What happens when people make the effort to exercise and eat healthfully? If Federation’s Healthy Lifestyles Initiative is any indication, better choices bring rewards.

“We have seen decreases in weight and lowering of blood pressure due to healthier eating,” said Lauren Torreblanca, Program Manager of Supportive Scattered-Site Housing Teams A and B.

“Even seeing someone who has been successfully working out gives motivation to others,” Torreblanca said, adding that 12 residents from Team B have been participating in the program since early 2018.

Healthy Lifestyles promotes setting goals that include exercise, nutrition, and seeing a primary care physician on a regular basis.

Associate Director Eric Schatzel has observed that residents themselves are proof of the program’s success. “We hear: ‘I lost forty pounds. I want to lose another ten.’ And that

leads to 'I want to build more muscle.'”

Team B Case Managers Rachel Arato and Monique Nam play an active role in encouraging residents to stick with the program. They have gone grocery shopping with residents to help them read labels and figure out the salt, carb, and sugar content. They have also linked residents to local services such as low-cost gyms.

Congratulations to all the residents who are pursuing a healthier lifestyle and, by their example, inspiring others to overcome hurdles, exercise more, and make better food choices!

Letters from Clients Reflect Lives That Have Changed for the Better

There's perhaps no better testament to the quality of care provided by Federation staff than the letters the agency receives from grateful clients. The following excerpts are from individuals in Federation's Nursing Home Diversion Supportive Housing Program, which provides safe living environments for people who qualify for nursing homes but wish to remain in the community.

Susan P., who had been a stay-at-home mother of four, wrote about how the aftermath of her divorce rendered her homeless and in need of a job. After living in multiple homeless shelters, she found Federation.

“Your program has allowed me to feel like I have a home again, or the closest I've been in 17 years! . . . Here is a home. A house I've been able to warm to a home. A yard, working slowly and carefully that's turning into a garden with flowers and animals. I'm in my glory! Neighbors that are more than willing to meet you and have a conversation. I am extremely grateful and humble to be given this chance.
Thank you.”

Lyn C. was going to dialysis three times a week while living in a homeless shelter.

“Federation of Organizations has been a Godsend. . . . From the beginning of the application process through to placement everyone I dealt with was wonderful and did their best to help me and speed the process to align me with housing as soon as possible. . . . It is very comforting to know I have a safe, clean environment to come home to. . . . Everyone associated with Federation has been wonderful and makes sure my needs are met. They are constantly checking in to make sure I am o.k. and that I have food and transportation, etc. It is a great feeling to be independent and to be able to concentrate on managing my illness and not worry about housing.”

Tina C. wrote about difficulties she experienced after her husband died and how Federation changed her life for the better.

“When my husband died I became very distant to everyone around me. I became very sick and I was not able to move my legs. . . . I felt like I went deeper into that dark place. I was going to be homeless until I contacted you at Federation to see if you can help me. You came through for me and also gave me the courage to fight. This program turned my life around and you all inspired me so much to make my life better. There are not enough thank you's in this world for all of you to see and feel how much you inspired me. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.”

John S. wrote about his search for a place to live.

“When I was at the end of my rope, I applied for different types of housing. I had lost my

vision completely, and was about to be homeless after separating from my then wife. Federation was the one who responded first and was very helpful. They truly help me with all of my needs, paying rent through my trust, making sure I have food and most of all having a roof over my head. My situation was very dire, and Federation expedited arrangements for me so I was no longer homeless.”

Jonathan S. Finds Comfort in Federation’s Financial Management Services

Managing finances can be challenging for everyone. For those with disabilities, paying the rent and handling expenses can be daunting. That’s why Federation offers Financial Management services to individuals with a primary psychiatric diagnosis. The goal is to help individuals gain independence and develop skills to manage their finances independently.

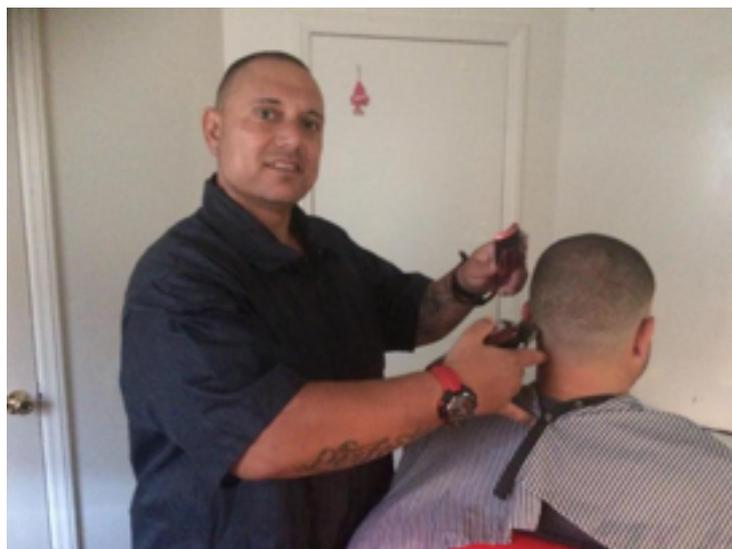
In June, Barbara Faron, Federation’s Chief Executive Officer, received a letter of praise from Jonathan S. In it, Rep Payee Christine Ford gets a glowing review.

Dear Ms. Faron,

Hi. I’m writing to say thank you for the Financial Management program and extol my rep payee Christine Ford. I have been a client of Financial Management since 2010, w/Christine being my rep payee since approx. 2011. I had fallen into arrears w/my rent and was threatened w/ eviction in another program, but since getting a rep payee, my rent has never missed a month!! Christine is a wonderful payee. She is easy to work with, and is willing to work w/clients based on their needs. She always returns calls and is polite and helpful on the phone. . . . She is helping me save for a new microwave. It is a very comforting security having someone responsibly look out for your finances if you have trouble doing so. Thank you Ms. Faron, for yet one more service bettering the quality of life for disabled people!! (and credit the payees, too!!)

*Sincerely,
Jonathan S.*

In His Own Words: Jason R. Follows His Heart All the Way to the Barber Chair



Life is full of lessons. Sometime the toughest lessons create opportunities for growth. In his own words, Jason R. tells the story of lessons he learned on his path to becoming a barber and how Federation played a role in helping him overcome seemingly insurmountable odds.

When I found out I had passed the state exam, it was after waiting a breathless two weeks. I had worked so hard. I was elated when I opened my email and got the answer I had been waiting so long to hear: “You have passed and are now a New York State licensed barber.”

Cutting hair was a passion from an early age, but I didn’t know that it was to be my calling in life. At 12, I was cutting my own hair, mainly because of fiscal reasons. Now, 20-plus years later, I still cut my own hair using two mirrors. When I cut hair, it can be a 10-hour day, and I’m happy the entire time. I don’t feel stressed or angry. I have no physical or mental anguish at all. That’s how I know it’s the right fit for me. Most of my life, I did labor-intensive work and hated every moment of every day. Sunday night blues were always the worst for me. Now I look forward to cutting hair, and whatever challenges may come with it, I feel alive and creative.

When I was older, a man told me, “Do what you love for a living, and you will never work a day in your life.” That stayed with me. Finally one day, I just decided to follow my heart and not my pocket and, no matter what, follow it through to the end. I had been notorious for starting some training, losing interest, and never pursuing it.

I finally decided that the only one who can change my life is me, and the world doesn’t owe me. If anything, I owe the world something for the many blessings that have been bestowed upon me throughout my life. I was able to put my pride in my pocket, take the cotton out of my ears, and accept the fact that I didn’t know it all. It was then that I reached out to Philip Matcovsky at Federation for help. He began the process of helping me rebuild my life and provided me with the support of this amazing agency.

I have been blessed with Federation’s SPA Housing. There’s a spare room that I have been granted permission to use as a single chair haircutting studio. I also cut hair for men and women at the PROS program in Patchogue. I feel blessed to have worked with Karen Leggio and Philip Matcovsky in creating, designing, and starting this program to help the clients. It’s my way of paying it forward and not forgetting where I came from, because not too long ago I was a client at PROS for three years.

Without Federation and its staff, and my hard work and dedication, I don’t think I would be the man I am today. As a matter of fact, I know I wouldn’t be.

Down the line, I hope to move down south with my brother and open up our very own barbershop and eventually make a chain of them in the south. Basically, I wish to be a successful human being who helps mankind and gives to the world and not takes from it. I want to leave my mark in a positive way, so when I’m gone, my dash on my headstone represents a life well-lived with a purpose from God to be a giver and not a taker. Isn’t that what life is all about? Helping your fellow man and living in peace. Isn’t that the true path to happiness?

Federation’s Brooklyn 34 Residential Program Reaches Capacity!

Federation of Organizations is excited to announce that yet another residential program has reached capacity! As of June 2018, all thirty-four beds in the Brooklyn 34 program have been filled.

This process took much time and care on the part of Federation staff. The program was transitioned from another agency to Federation in May 2017. At the time, none of the clients were aware of the transition. It took many months for Federation staff to build a rapport of trust and communication with clients. Staff worked day in and day out to show clients that they were there to help and support them.

First they focused on getting to know the residents and made sure all proper documentation was completed. Staff then focused on letting clients know that their voices would be heard and that clients and staff would work together as a team. Staff worked diligently to create strong relationships with existing residents while simultaneously moving quickly to place new residents in open beds.

“Our residents have been through so much and let me tell you that they are amazing!” said Christian Marroquin, Program Supervisor. “Building trust with our residents understandably took some time but we received so much support from our Director of Residential Services Kelly Smith, our Associate Director Eric Schatzel and other residential supervisors including: Jessica Borawski, Yanira Idefonso, Dana Walker, and Jesse Marroquin. This was truly a team effort, and I am so proud of our staff and our residents!”

Songs of Recovery Inspire Residents



Sometimes a song captures a universal feeling. On the afternoon of August 1st, Ben Myers, an acoustic singer-songwriter and motivational speaker, came to Federation’s PROS program and used songs to tell his story of recovery.

Myers shared how creating and listening to music fostered healing through dark times associated with depression, an eating disorder, and relationships. During his two-hour interactive performance, he encouraged clients to participate. It didn’t take long for many of the 29 members in attendance to open up. They sang, danced, and asked lots of questions.

Members also took part in the preparations. They made beautiful centerpieces out of flowers donated by St. Michael’s Church in Farmingville. They set out snacks and coffee, along with vanilla syrup provided by Starbucks. Balloons, donated by Party City, created a festive atmosphere.

As the afternoon drew to a close, many members vowed to keep practicing their songs. Kudos to Peer Counselor Lauren Warnes, who originated the idea and helped to coordinate a heartwarming event.

with Federation to Make Process Improvements



Last year, Federation was excited to be chosen to participate the MAX Series or Medicaid Accelerated eXchange program through the Suffolk Care Collaborative. The key objective of the MAX program is to help organizations participating DSRIP programs reduce hospital admissions and emergency department use. Through a series of workshops focused on improving care, the MAX program supports the goal of transforming the system by strengthening care collaborations and getting patients the right care at the right time.

Federation worked in partnership with the Suffolk Care Collaborative and assembled a team to work on this project. The team consisted of Elizabeth Galati, MA Director of Strategic Partnerships and Resources Development, Jason Vandewater, LCSW, Director of Clinical Services, Ryan Busuttil, LMSW, Associate Director of Clinical Services, Carissa Romano, Physician's Assistant, and Kim Tucker, Development Implementation Specialist.

The team identified a small group people who frequently use hospital services and also identified why they were going to the hospital or emergency room so often. With the help of real-time data and based on conversations with clients, the team discovered that unnecessary hospital visits stemmed from a lack of connections to primary care providers and medication management related to obtaining refills. Therefore, connecting individuals to community resources was key to getting them the right care and providing an alternative to unnecessary hospital visits.

Federation monitored the individuals over a 12-month period. The results? One-hundred percent were successfully linked to primary care, and only three clients out of 12 subsequently returned to the hospital. All of the individuals remained out of the emergency room for medication refills, and 50 percent were eligible for home medication delivery.

Federation's team was proud to present their results at the June Suffolk Care Collaborative PAC Meeting! Job well done!



Staff Achievements!

Congrats to our staff on these impressive milestones with Federation!
We truly value your service!

25 Years

Tracy Falkner

15 Years

Cheryl Gumbs
Yvette Williams
Richard Diem
Barbara Selden
Michael Perry
Lisa Weiss

10 Years

Yolanda Davis
Julian Stanley
Christine Fazio
Diane Kyrkostas
Kelly Dean

5 Years

Christopher Spence
Charles Carew
Elisa Hancock-Lapaix
Christina McCourt
Jocelyn Kuan
Lauren Torreblanca
Daniela Richmond
Lynn Reilly
Jesse Marroquin
Ruth Lindgren

In addition, Michelle Alam, Peer Advocate at Creedmoor, became a certified peer specialist!

Save the Date!

Federation of Organizations *presents*
the **NYC Community Partner Awards
& Networking Event**

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2018 | 5:30-7:30PM

Del Frisco's Double Eagle Steakhouse

Cocktails and Hors d'oeuvres

CLICK HERE
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