



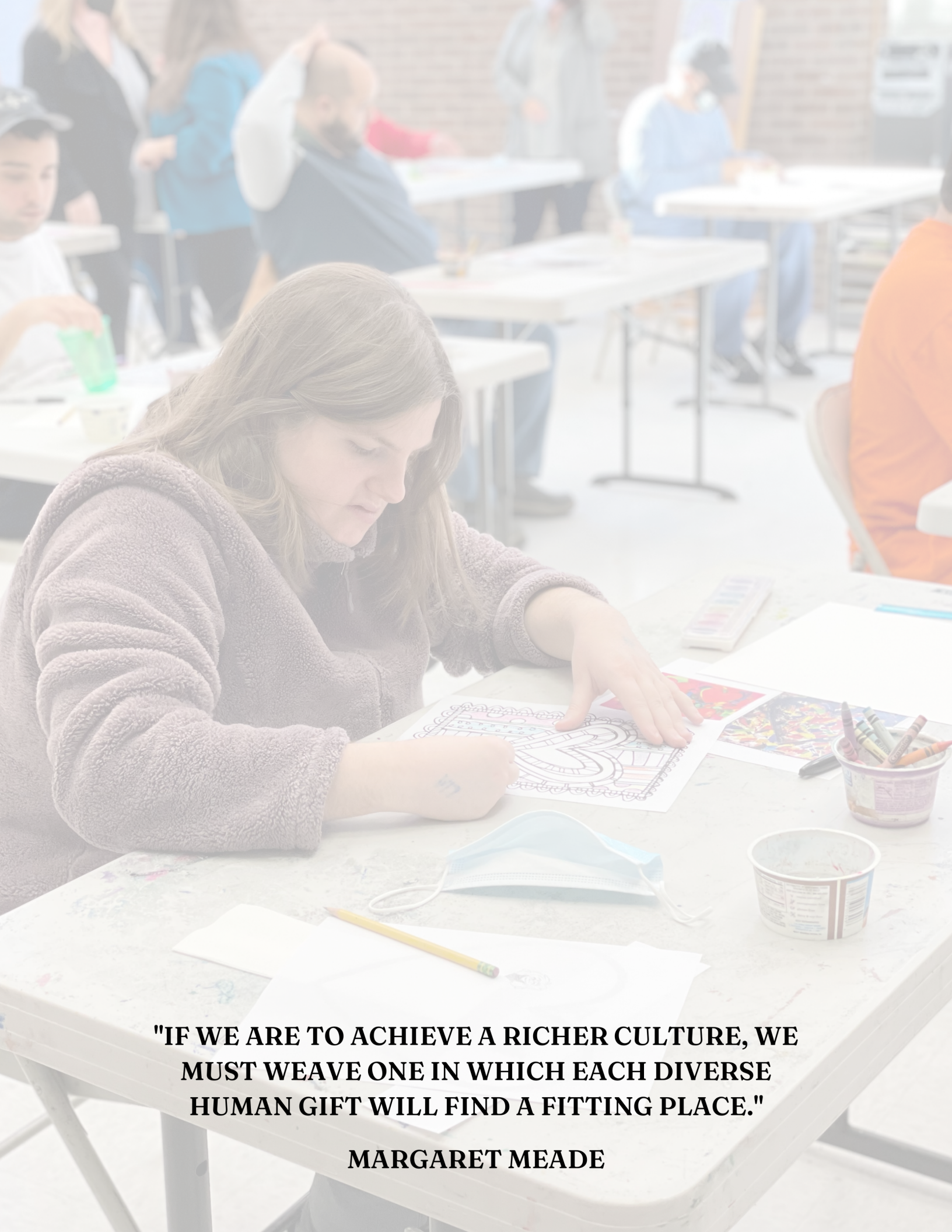
An Aid To The Developmentally Disabled Company

ELEVATING LIVES FOR OVER 35 YEARS



2021 ANNUAL REPORT





**"IF WE ARE TO ACHIEVE A RICHER CULTURE, WE  
MUST WEAVE ONE IN WHICH EACH DIVERSE  
HUMAN GIFT WILL FIND A FITTING PLACE."**

**MARGARET MEADE**



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# Executive Director's Report 2021

Charles Evdos

The pandemic in 2021 made caring for our individuals exceedingly difficult and costly. Our staff, who clearly demonstrated, they were essential workers, really applied their skills to protect and care for all those we serve. We continue to advocate for all staff to be paid a fair wage. NYS has made some progress, but our direct care workers earn \$15 to \$16 per hour....NYS requires our staff to be trained in various areas. The problem lies that someone can make more at a fast-food chain than in this field. NYS needs to raise our reimbursement to incorporate a salary that is fair and really gives all our essential employees a higher standard of earning. Rise will continue to advocate for our staff and the individuals we serve. We ask our families, friends to all advocate for these essential employees.

## Here are some highlights from 2021:

- We have opened a new site in Huntington called Rise in Spirit. The new venture is a true partnership between two agencies.... Spirit of Huntington and Rise Life Services. The beauty of the partnership is that it incorporates art, dance, music, sculpturing, jobs program, adult program, food pantry and a mental health clinic all under one roof. The services rendered are for special needs, developmentally disabled, autism, mental health, veterans and the community..... and so much more..... This is the first of its kind in NYS all under one roof. The site has generated a great deal of press. We were featured on Channel 12 and 2, LIBN, LI Press, Newsday and five local papers in Huntington. JoAnn has already filled the slots for the No Wall Program. We project a surplus in this program of over \$750k in 2022. We are on our way!
- The Spirit of Huntington has generated \$200k in donations so far.....Harvey Manes has donated \$150k and will join our new Rise in Spirit Board.....he has indicated he will get others to join this effort....we expect even more in 2022.
- The Out-Patient Clinic will open in January 2022. It will provide group therapy and we will be going to individuals very shortly. This new program will also expand its service to children.....this is a new area for Rise.
- The construction on the Sensory Garden expansion should begin in early 2022. Once finalized it will allow further growth to the PWW Program.



## 2021 Annual Report

- The COVID Pandemic has made it exceedingly difficult for staffing. I must give kudos to our staff for continuing their efforts during 2021. NYS has approved bonuses for essential staff. We expect approval in January 2022. Well deserved.
- We are waiting for approval from NYS to begin converting three of our garages into bedrooms. This will help reduce cost and bring deficits in the OPWDD down. We will probably sell Site 32 once completed to pay for the renovations.
- We now have our own television show on LTV...The Elevating RISE LTV show taped has eight shows in 2021 on a variety of subjects. The goal is to help and educate individual about special needs, developmentally disabled, autism, special needs trust and many topics that will benefit the community..
- We have created a Helpline 1-855-Rise Life. Many times we get calls from families on what do I do if my child has a developmental disability, special needs, autism. This hotline is another way that Rise is looking to help families who do not know where to turn for help. We are marketing this extensively so families will know where to call for help.
- Our efforts to advocate for our direct care workers was evident when we began holding press conferences. Our first press conference held on August 24th at RISE was an enormous success. We were featured on CBS TV, Newsday, and various local papers. Goal is to get NYS to free up funds.....The Federal Government has allocated over \$900 million for these essential workers....sitting in NYS coffers since April 1st 2021. This a crying shame and a blemish on NYS. Assemblywoman Rebecca Seawright has invited me to speak at the NYS Assembly in January in Albany. I hope this will also help this effort.
- We are still waiting for the Riverhead Township to approve the expansion of the barn at the Sensory Garden. Once completed the goal is to eventually move the current No Wall Program in Main Building to this site. BTW we have reached our goal of forty-seven individuals in this program. Ture.
- Our food pantry continues its magnificent work in helping those in need. Long Island Cares has provided Rise with a new food van where we can deliver food to those who are unable to come to our two food pantries. The donations and grants we receive fund this program.

I want to thank our Board of Directors at Rise for all their support and generosity.



# IRA/ICF Programs (OPWDD)

Jeanette Permenter

Although 2020 was a year of change for everyone, 2021 brought forth experiences no one could have imagined. With the settling in of COVID19 the OPWDD Programs (IRA – Individualized Residential Alternative and ICF–Intensive Care Facilities) continued to flourish and embrace the changes. We successfully and diligently continued to work on fulfilling our mission of supporting our residents in achieving a higher quality of life by emphasizing independence and choice.

During 2021, even though the COVID19 pandemic directly affected many of the OPWDD programs, many of the programs were still able to take part in vacations and holiday parties throughout the year. The many of the IRA programs attended a three-day trip to Camelback Mountain Resort and Indoor Water Park in Pennsylvania. Several combined parties were held in 2021 that included an Annual IRA Summer BBQ and Halloween Costume party. Although several of the programs had to quarantine for weeks at time causing staff to have to stay at the program 24 hours a day to ensure oversight of the individuals, the individuals and the staff took it in stride. Creative minds allowed for fun engaging activities to be maintained within the residences as well as continued family contact.

In addition to always striving for the highest quality of services, in 2021 the OPWDD programs welcomed a new structure and new members of the Administrative Team. The new structure combined the OPWDD services into one comprehensive team.

It is our hope that streamlining services will provide for more consistency across OPWDD programs. We are excited about this collaboration and look forward to continuing to make RISE LIFE SERVICES shine!

This new team comes with many years of experience. The management members within OPWDD services, have continued to work on increasing residential opportunities, increase individualized support for the residents, and further empower the staff to more effectively support the individuals we are privileged to serve.



## 2021 Annual Report

OPWDD was also privileged with welcoming on a new Director of Nursing, allowing for more comprehensive medical care across the OPWDD programs. Additionally, we have increased our Licensed Practical Nurses throughout the programs and hired two more full time Registered Nurses as an increase in oversight.

2021 was a year like no other. As OPWDD Operations Director, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff members that are a part of the OPWDD program success: Direct Support Professionals, Managers, Program Coordinators, Assistant Director, Maintenance Department, Nursing, and Administrative Support staff. Your caring, dedication, and commitment is greatly appreciated.

The OPWDD programs truly embodied the quote from Henry Ford "Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success." Let's make 2022 an even more successful year!!



# Human Resources

Christopher Nassauer

Navigating the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath is one of the biggest business challenges for Human Resource Operations of our time. It was year of reactive solutions, often with efforts that had no long-term focus to them. The movement for social justice added additional challenges as well.

The greatest challenge was recruiting. The post-pandemic period created numerous acute short- and long-term factors affecting hiring in 2021. These factors include:

- Workforce burnout and depression
- Fear of infection, resulting in fear of returning to the workplace
- Extended unemployment and other benefits
- Increased family care needs
- Location disruption
- Specific industry changes—for example, healthcare, restaurants & hospitality, and public safety
- Hastened retirements and career-pausing
- Postponed schooling/training/graduation, causing delayed workforce entry

While most of these acute factors will wane with time, there will also be lasting echoes, especially given the longer-term trends that have been steadily transforming the employer-employee relationship.

At the same time keeping up with the compliance requirements with mandates, CDC guidance, OPWDD/OMH/CMS/DOH requirements were a full-time effort as well. Calls for social justice have ramped up compliance demands as well.

In July a new HR Operations Director was hired. In October the onboarding and off boarding process was changed to allow for a more laser focused effort in each area.

At the same time our HRIS System (Paycom) was enhanced with a vaccination and testing tracking module. We continue to work with our Programs to promote staff engagement, improve staff retention and incentivize staff. Bonuses, when funding were available, were awarded to staff who met criteria set forth.



## 2021 Annual Report

Looking ahead in 2022, Human Resources must be prepared for the following:

- Be prepared for employees looking to HR for childcare support/resources and for information about how the company is combating bias and fostering inclusion.
- Be prepared by having proactive conversations about how to support employee wellbeing; reviewing policies, practices, and benefits; training managers on handling workplace accommodation requests; and providing employee education on health, safety, and wellness.
- Be prepared to address DEI and bias in new ways across the employee experience.
- Be prepared for continued regulatory activity on the state and local levels, particularly to combat bias and inequity.
- Be prepared to consider assessing your values, policies, and practices to ensure they are aligned in support of an inclusive, ethical, and sustainable workplace.



# THE MAIN STREET CONNECTIONS DAY PROGRAM WITHOUT WALLS

JoAnn Vitale

Rise opened it's first day program in January 2018 – The Main Street Connection. Since opening this program has grown quickly with a current enrollment of 52 individuals. Participants of this innovative program are offered the opportunity to participate in the life of the community. ***The day program encourages and challenges individuals to use and build on their skills.*** The program prepares a biweekly schedule with a variety of activities to choose from each day with the input of the individual. The group works on establishing productive routines that support each individual's goals such as:

- Promoting independence and exploring community integration opportunities.
- Maintaining and enhancing academic skills
- Recreational activities: i.e. soccer, basketball, nature walks, swimming, dancing and bowling.
- Group outings such as trips to parks, beaches, fairs, movies, museums, the YMCA and the library.
- Participation in The Spirit of Huntington classes: art, music, clay and movement.

The Main Street Connection day program is unique with a special focus on integration into the community. Each individual helps choose their goals for the program. We integrate those into the community through activities:

- Money management skills can be done making a purchase or counting out items.
- Social interaction is speaking with a store clerk, a waitress or a friend.
- Reading a street sign, a menu, doing a word search or reading an exhibit at a museum builds or strengthens reading skills.
- Choosing a new experience widens the world.





Having a relaxing day at the park, aquarium, beach or fishing is recreation. Engaging people in new, liked and challenging programming to enhance lives is Rise's Day Program The Main Street Connection's mission.

The Main Street Connection will be expanding west. Rise Life Services and The Spirit of Huntington Art Center have joined together to purchase the community art center. The building will become a cultural art center and a second Rise Life Services Day Program The Main Street Connection-West which is scheduled to open late January 2022.

# THE MAIN STREET CONNECTIONS FOOD PANTRY

JoAnn Vitale

The Main Street Market Food Pantry at Rise in Riverhead provides needed assistance to the community, serving approximately 350 families in the community. We have been receiving large donations from local farms of fresh fruits and vegetables which has been a great benefit to the community members that visit our food pantry.

The Riverhead Pantry continues assisting the Department of Health to provide contact less deliveries of food to families in the community who have to quarantine. Rise has been able to assist upwards of 150 people each week. In addition, the pantry now delivers food to 15 senior citizen homes, who are unable to travel to our location.

Rise Hampton Bays Food Pantry is now open Thursdays and we are eager to begin serving a new community.

In addition, the pantries offer individuals who reside at Rise and attend Day Program, the opportunity to work in a supportive employment atmosphere. This helps build their skills which could lead to competitive employment in the community.

The Day Programs and the food pantries are positively increasing Rise's presence in the community.



# Quality Improvement & Compliance Department

Megan Kolsch

QI & Compliance has taken the lead with all reporting of COVID events, as well as notifying the Local Health Department, Justice Center, and OPWDD/MH with positive COVID results for both employees and individuals receiving our services. QI/Compliance department developed a COVID prevention policy and procedure which provides residential and day programs guidance and preventive measures to minimize the COVID/Coronaviruses. During the month of December 2021, the amount of COVID positive cases were astronomical. Despite this noted spike and a significant staffing crisis, RISE did not mandate any confirmed COVID positive team member work if they were symptomatic and/or in a quarantine of any kind. The QI/Compliance department works very close with management and administration when a confirmed COVID case arises. Managers are required to train their respective essential teams on the following topics:

- Infection Control.
- Slow the spread
- People at Risk
- RISE Life Services COVID prevention procedures and response plan.

QI continues to support residential during this staffing crisis and my team members have stepped up to cover shifts as needed. ***OPWDD has complimented the agency for our COVID response, and we have received excellent reports regarding COVID compliance.*** Our valued managers and administration have truly stepped up during this long COVID pandemic.

## OPWDD System COVID-19 Update Statistics.

- As of April 14, 2021, there have been 10,338 confirmed COVID-19 positive cases statewide.
- Of those that tested positive, 7,047 individuals resided in certified residential programs.
- A total of 649 individuals statewide who tested positive have passed.
- A total of 14,423 staff were reported as confirmed COVID-19 positive.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) continues to recommend that those persons in congregate settings/healthcare settings should continue to quarantine. Our COVID procedure and prevention plan was recently updated to include ICF employees must be vaccinated.

As of October 2021, and again in December 2021 RISE has completed the notification and attestation checklist for certified residence to both OHM and OPWDD in the event, we should have mitigating staffing circumstances that would require mandating essential staff to cover shifts to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those we provide residential support services too.

RISE continues to acknowledge the impact of COVID-19 on the emotional, social, and psychological well-being on individuals and staff.

OPWDD Category/Classification Jan. 2021- June 2022	Number of Incidents	Percentage
<b>Minor Notable Occurrence</b>		
Injury	20	100%
Theft/Financial Exploitation	0	0%
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Reportable Abuse and Neglect</b>		
Deliberate inappropriate use of restraints	0	0%
Neglect	10	43.48%
Obstruction of reports of reportable incidents	0	0%
Physical Abuse	8	34.78%
Psychological Abuse	2	8.7%
Sexual Abuse	1	4.35%
Unlawful use or administration of a controlled substance	0	0%
Use of aversive conditioning	2	8.7%
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Reportable Significant</b>		
Choking, with known risk	0	0%
Choking, with no known risk	2	6.25%
Conduct between individuals receiving services	7	21.88%
Inappropriate use of restraints	0	0%
Injury, with hospital admission	3	9.38%
Medication Error with adverse effect	5	15.62%
Missing Person	0	0%
Mistreatment	12	37.5%
Other Significant Incident	1	3.12%
Other mistreatment	0	0%
Seclusion	0	0%
Self-abusive behavior with injury	0	0%
Theft/Financial Exploitation	2	6.25%
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Annual External Audits Include:

OMH/OPWDD/OFPC/OMIG conducted the following external re-certification visits in the past 3 Months.

- Jamesport ICF
- Calverton ICF
- Northville ICF
- Ridge ICF
- Cutchogue ICF
- OMH 3-year recertification has been successfully completed partially remotely. Three (3) years of investigative reports were reviewed as well as many compliance policies \* QA had worked with organizing all requires incident management areas and supporting the department through this audit process as needed.
- Grand opening of Elevations Clinic Title 31-Operating Certificate provided.
- OMIG initiated an audit this past year in our MH department. All request documents were sent, and we are awaiting the outcome.

During the past year OPWDD began a new Survey Re-Design Truncated Survey's (for our IRA residences only) -which includes the following Evergreen, Sutton, Randall, Tuthill's, Lakeview, Cross River, and Patti Lane IRA. The new Truncated Survey's Review include the following:

- Fire Safety
- Physical Plant
- Person centered audits. (Medical, life plan, Incidents etc.)
- Full incident management
- COVID compliance.

### Accomplishments:

- The QI team continues to chair the monthly Human Rights Committee meetings to ensure the individual(s) behavior support plans and psychotropic medication regimes are not in violation to the individuals rights.

- The QI/Compliance Department continues to teach abuse prevention minimally 3-4 per month and as needed. The QI department also teaches on HIPAA and Corporate Compliance.
- The QI Director conducted a training on Human Rights Training/Occurrences/ Incident Reporting for Nursing and IRA and ICF management trainings.
- QI Team has initiated evening Abuse Prevention Training for new employees and existing. Additionally, QI will be teaching at the Huntington PWW West for new and existing who need to recertify their abuse prevention.
- QI/Compliance Assistant Director has been instrumental in conducting Utilization Reviews for our Elevations Clinic.
- The QI Team continues to attend monthly Task Force meetings and remains in contact with both MH and OPWDD regional offices to remain current on hot topics, updated guidance, safety alerts, COVID updates, and nursing memorandums.
- The QI team has been participating in Corrective Action Plan Audit(s) conducted by the Justice Center throughout the year. The audit process involves a great deal of scrutiny with past allegations of abuse and neglect. The standards for recommendations must include current staff rosters, and training for all employees specific to the incident/allegation(s). This has been a very time-consuming process and requires validation/supporting documentation to ensure systemic correction.



### **Accomplishments Continued:**

- The QI team also participates in the OMH/OPWDD quarterly trend meetings to review non-reportable events and analyzed to minimize future events.
- The QI Department works closely with the Program Coordinator, Managers and Directors on ensuring incidents are closed as required. Currently the ICF division has incidents open, but we are working with the team on holding a recommendation collection meeting to further assist and/or support.
- The QI Department continues to attend and help facilitate all external audits for re-certification and ensure corrective action plans are submitted to OMH/OPWDD/DOH/OFPC timely as required.
- The QI/Compliance continues to conduct internal support visits and billing audits to ensure compliance.
- The QI Director/Corporate Compliance Officer also investigates all concerns relating to HIPAA compliance, billing compliance and overall regulatory compliance. (Any corporate compliance issues are tracked and available upon request)–
- The QI Director recently developed monthly billing compliance verification forms to attest that all billing reports are meeting the OMIG requirements. The Program Manager and Program Coordinator/Director are required to complete and submit monthly.
- The QI/CCO obtained all conflict-of-interest forms for key employees this year and has start to gather 2022 in January. QI Director also worked in close collaboration with HR Director to ensure we capture all employees once upon hire and then key employees, and Board Members annually.
- QI/CCO has ensure business agreements are signed when consulting with external companies to ensure HIPAA standards are met.

**Overall, the QI/Compliance department works in full collaboration with all program directors and clinical directors to ensure regulatory compliance and effect systems for operations.**

### **GOALS for New Year:**

- QI/Compliance/Risk Management Restructuring– to spike out the three areas of focus under one department.
- Increase FTEs for department to support the growth of the organization.
- Increase support visits & contemporaneous billing audits.

# Mental Health Program

Cherita Brown

## Safety

- COVID safety remained priority. Continuous systemic implementation, housekeeping monitoring protocols, and weekly use of electrostatic machinery to ensure sanitation.
- Development of Med Safe protocol to safeguard proper disposal of both controlled and non-controlled medications
- Ongoing education of the effects of alcohol, marijuana, and opiates. An increase was identified in this area, while MICA housing and substance abuse services remained limited and/or unavailable.
- Capital improvements- updates included safety modifications, implementation of construction safety plans, and improvement of response time to life-safety concerns.
- Staffing is a critical component of successful operations. To ensure safety, RISE developed a salary tier system to reward staff for their combined education and experience. This initiative was also intended to attract qualified mental health professionals.
- Exploration of alternative housing opportunities for Individuals whose needs surpass the support available within the community residence. Many Individuals were able to transition to the Treatment Apartment program, Supportive housing, and skilled nursing facilities, as appropriate. Additionally, service recipients requiring OPWDD services were connected to CCO's to begin their transitional process.

## Support Roles

- **Behavioral Intervention Specialist**
  - Developed onboarding curriculum to ensure all new employees are effectively trained on Behavior Support plans
  - Trained all staff members on Individual diagnosis to improve staff/client interactions. A system was also developed to train employees who are reassigned to support other MH programs
  - Implemented site specific trainings- De-escalation and proactive techniques, Sensitivity training, Professionalism training, and offered on-site role modeling of appropriate client engagement
  - Art Therapy group was moved to on-site to allow the Individuals this recreational and therapeutic opportunity

## 2021 Annual Report

- **Wellness**

- Overall wellness was a very big focus for the MH department during the latter part of 2021, and ongoing. The Medication Specialist for OMH was promoted to Wellness Coordinator; This role focusing on the overall well-being of the Individuals by providing ongoing monitoring of their physical health, behavioral health, medication, environment, and appearance. Additionally, the Wellness Specialist role was added to support this initiative.
- Narcan- The Wellness Coordinator became Narcan trained in the hopes that all Individuals who are prescribed Narcan would have a certified staff member on the mental health team. As well, a future goal would be for all team members to be Narcan trained, and for RISE to become an official Opiate prevention program.
- Quarterly communication meetings with associated pharmacies to guarantee availability of medication, discussions on programmatic/Individual needs, and exploration of added services.

### **Home Improvements**

RISE's mental health department strives to promote a home-like environment. A range of improvements occurred throughout the year such as: bathroom remodeling, fresh painting, new furniture/appliances, stabilization of foundation, roof repairs, driveway updates, installation of new kitchen(s), lifetime plank floors, and outside awnings to protect the individuals from inclement weather while smoking safely (50 ft. from home).

### **Other Noteworthy**

- Billing and Progress note training was officially included in MH employee training track.
- MH staff banded together to memorialize the Individuals' whose lives were lost because of the COVID pandemic
- Training- CPI learning module was utilized for Management trainings. This allowed all team members to stay abreast of requirements and refresh essential skills



# Elevations Outpatient Treatment Program

Tracey Andersen

After over two years of planning, Rise Life Services received the operating certificate to open its first outpatient clinic, The Elevations Outpatient Treatment Program, with a grand opening scheduled for early 2022. We made this announcement publicly on our local cable channel LTV in August of this year.

Elevations Outpatient Treatment Program aims to improve the overall mental health and well-being of community members through providing very much needed services such as for assessment, symptom management, education about medication or diagnoses, counseling, psychotherapy, and medication management. We will address challenges that include but are not limited to anxiety, depression, ADHD, bi-polar disorder, personality disorders, trauma, schizophrenia, interpersonal conflicts, substance abuse, and childhood disorders.

The hours of this Article 31 clinic are Monday–Friday 9am–5pm and Tuesdays until 8. We will be expanding our hours to include Saturdays and additional evening hours later in 2022. After-hours crisis intervention around the clock 24/7 will also be available.

Our program will service adults, and children beginning ages 3 and up. We will provide services in individual, couple, family and group formats as well as via tele-mental health. We are able to provide services in over 50 languages and dialects

The program is currently fully staffed. We have a 2 Full Time Social Workers, a licensed Mental Health Counselor, a Nurse Practitioner of Psychiatry and a Psychiatrist. This is in addition to our wonderful support team such as our caring and friendly receptionists.

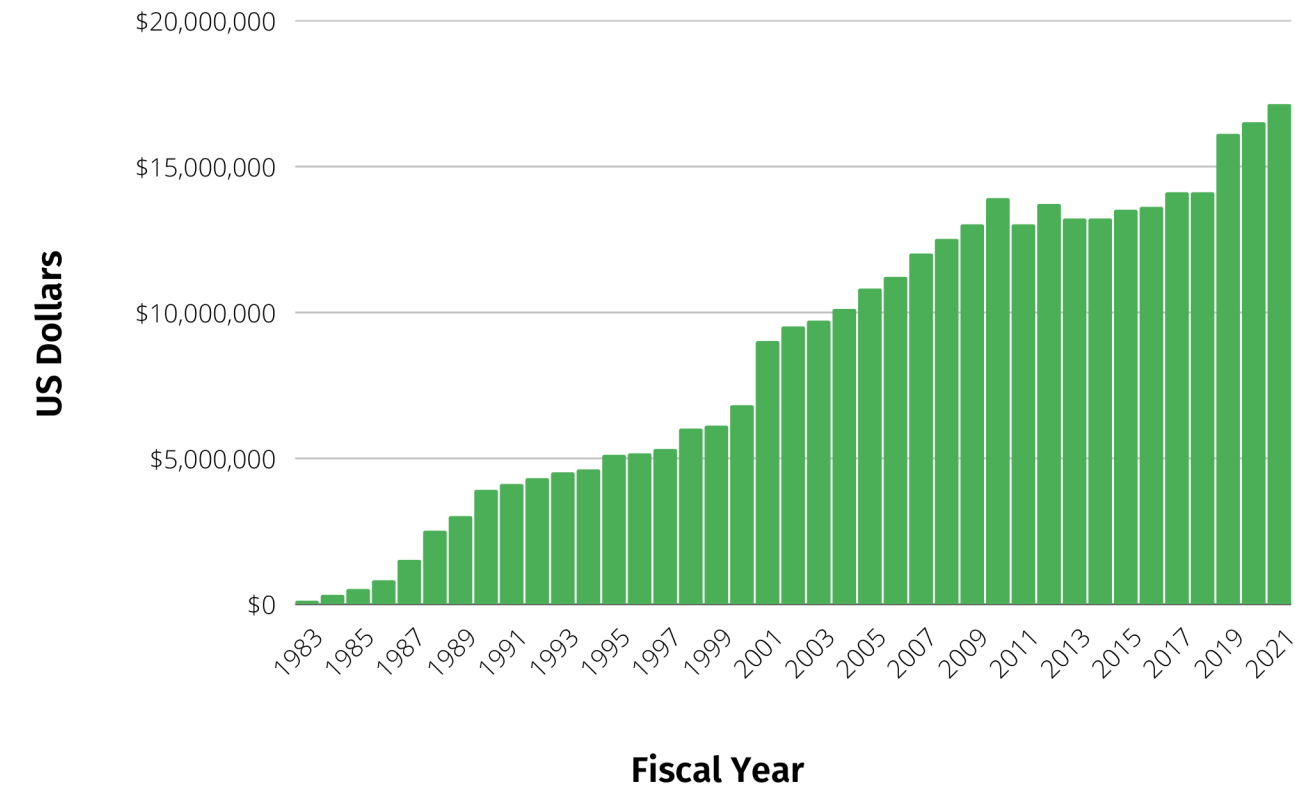
We have partnered with local schools, hospitals, law enforcement, and other mental health providers to coordinate care. We aim to assist with the mental health crisis in our local communities and have the support of our local political representatives.



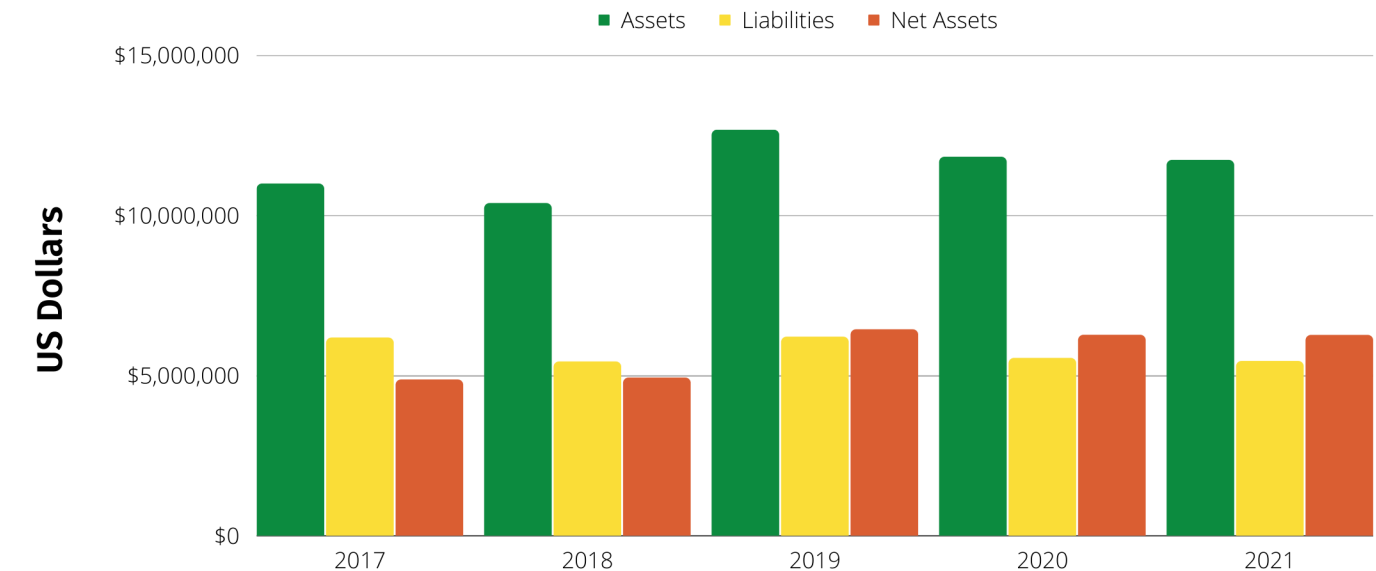
# Financial Reports

Holly Gurnick

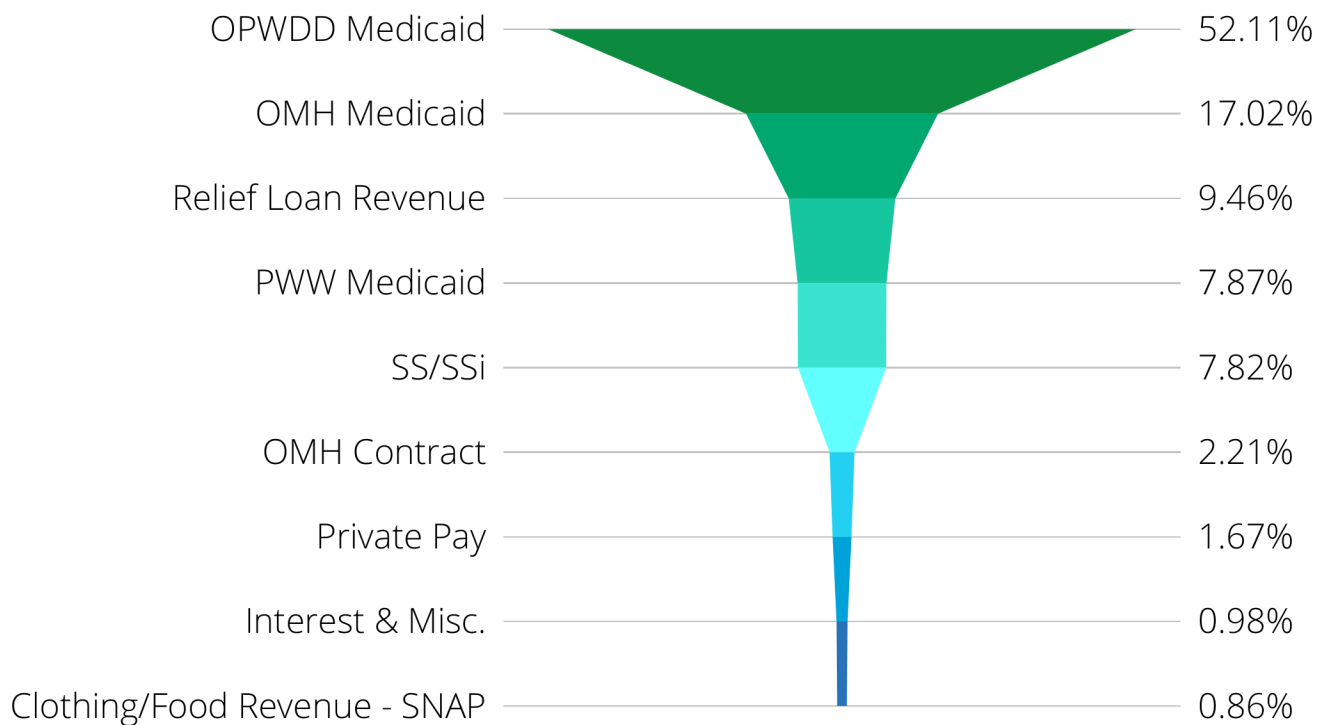
## Annual Revenue



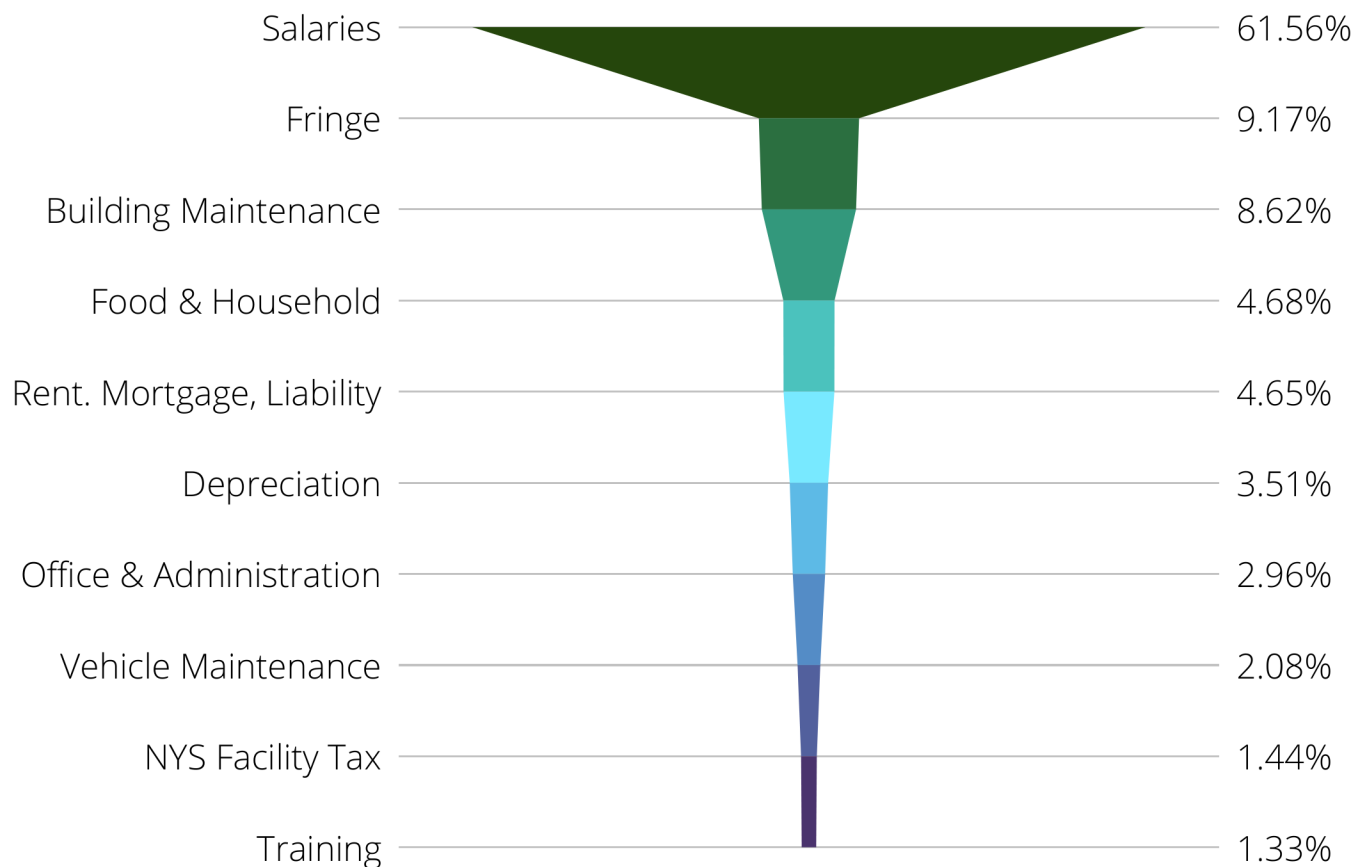
## Balance Sheet



## **Revenue Distribution by Funding Source**



## **Expense Distribution**







**THANK YOU SO MUCH TO ALL OF OUR DONORS. IT  
IS BECAUSE OF YOU, WE CAN CONTINUE TO HELP  
OUR SPECIAL NEIGHBORS AND OUR COMMUNITY.**





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