Highlighting the Past, Present and Future of Community Living Arrangements (CLAs)

In 1977, Saint Joseph’s opened its first Community Living Arrangement (CLA) in Dunmore, PA to provide a homelike setting for three children diagnosed with an intellectual disability. The CLA home was a nice alternative for the children who previously lived in large residential settings. House Parents who lived in the home Sunday evening to Friday evening served as staff. A relief staff provided care each weekend. Community-based activities were planned with the assistance of a part-time Activity Aid.

In 1978, a landmark decision in Pennsylvania led to the process of moving individuals from larger institutional settings to community homes like the CLA. In 1986, Saint Joseph’s strategized on developing community homes to meet the needs of individuals with intellectual as well as physical disabilities. In addition to 24-hour staffing, a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) was hired for each shift to meet the medical needs of residents. Saint Joseph’s was the first provider agency in Lackawanna/Susquehanna/Wayne Counties to develop community homes and support services for this population. Additional state funding was available to incentivize providers to fulfill the mandate to move individuals to smaller living settings. During the next several years, Saint Joseph’s Center continued to add community homes with a focus on person-centered planning. In July 1997, 38 individuals lived at one of eleven CLA homes. With the addition of the 12th home in 2016 and other renovations, 45 individuals are home at a Saint Joe’s CLA.

During this time of growth, there was simultaneous progress in the quantity and quality of community programs and the ability of residents to engage with others and the communities where the homes are located. Each month a schedule of activities is planned including such things as going to the movies, visiting a park, taking a trip for ice cream and shopping. Those who reside in the CLA homes have diverse interests, preferences and strengths. Therefore, they participate in various Community Participation Supports (CPS) including those offered by Saint Joseph’s Adult Day Services. Each day of the week, they participate in a variety of interesting educational and social activities, although some of the favorite activities have been interrupted due to the pandemic. A few volunteer locally through Meals on Wheels. To accommodate to changing needs, a new home is planned in the near future.

We are grateful to all the compassionate and caring employees who have provide support for the CLA residents and those in leadership positions who have coordinated the growth and development of this vital program. See article on page 3 featuring Ann Rink, Administrator of Community Services, who played a significant role in the success of the Community Living Arrangements over the years.
Summer Fest, Modified, But Successful Once Again

Thankfully, Joe Snedeker biked through Northeastern and Central PA for Go Joe 24. Joe traveled throughout the WNEP 16 viewing area, he started out going south to Shenandoah, then to Hughesville, Wyalusing, Jim Thorpe, and Susquehanna—making several stops along the way. On each of the five days, supporters cheered for Joe from their porches and downtowns and donated to Saint Joseph’s Center.

Without the traditional Summer Festival again this year, the WNEP Telethon broadcast from Marywood University aired for 2 hours. Joe arrived at the Learning Commons of Marywood University and then rode to the WNEP Station where Sister Maryalice, Jon Meyer and Joe’s family were waiting for him as he completed his ride.

With tremendous community support, the combined total for Go Joe 24 and WNEP Telethon was $313,105.93. Another great success that will help to ensure the services provided by Saint Joseph’s Center. However, within a few days, this good fortune doubled in size when Joe received an unexpected email from an unknown fan who offered to match the gift with an additional $315,000.

“The generosity of our community is incredible, it is truly heartwarming to witness the goodness of so many who are concerned about others. Saint Joseph’s Center is truly blessed with the love and support of Joe Snedeker, WNEP-TV 16, Sponsors, Donors and Friends who give of themselves every year to be sure Saint Joe’s residents and clients have what they need. Providing for those most vulnerable in our society is a privilege, and we are most appreciative of all who support us in this mission,” stated Sister Maryalice Jacquinot, IHM, President and CEO.

Additional Summer Fest activities included Go Joe Ride Along, drive-thru Chicken Dinner, Sidewalk Sale and Tricky Tray online Raffle. In weeks leading up to the Go Joe Bike Ride, many signed up or showed up at locally held events to do their part to ride for Saint Joe’s. On Sunday, July 26th, the Auxiliary and friends served 2,500 delicious, take-out chicken dinners. The spring Sidewalk Sale was a fine replacement for the usual General Store booth held each summer. Donated items were received and displayed by dedicated volunteers to sell at bargain prices.

Tricky Tray Basket Raffle was held online. Many loyal donors gave their basket in memory of MaryCarol Kanton who passed away in June 2021. MaryCarol organized and volunteered at the Tricky Tray booth for years along with her friends and family.

“The support is incredible even if we still need to be virtual with some events,” said Kathleen Timlin, Auxiliary Co-President. “The love and generosity for all those served by Saint Joseph’s Center is a true gift to witness. Kathleen and I are so grateful to everyone who helped make Summer Fest 2021 a success for Saint Joe’s!” added Maria Lawler, Auxiliary Co-President.

Thank you to all who volunteered, donated, shared a Facebook post, bought a chicken dinner, raffle ticket or Sidewalk Sale item. It all adds up and helps the Auxiliary fund the needs of residents and clients! Be assured of our gratitude and prayers!

William H. Bender II, CFP®, CIMA®, C(K)P®, CRPC®, CPFA®, Senior Vice President-Investments and Senior Institutional Consultant at Bender Private Wealth Management Group of Wells Fargo Advisors and Saint Joseph’s Center Foundation Board President has this to say about giving appreciated stock as an end-of-year gift:

“WHEN MANY PEOPLE THINK OF CHARITABLE GIVING, they think of receiving a fundraising letter and either mailing a check or using a credit card to support their favorite nonprofit. While traditional checkbook philanthropy is alive and well, it is not the most tax-effective strategy. A donor may be able to gift non-cash assets (appreciated stock, for example) to preserve more value for charitable causes, save on taxes before they are incurred, and position charitable assets for growth.”
Ann Rink Retires after 42 Years of Service

In her senior year at Marywood while completing her Special Education degree, Ann Loftus was hired by Sister Maria Dolora, IHM in April 1975 to serve as a Preschool teacher. A year later, she married Terry Rink and they moved to Virginia for a few years. Upon their return to Scranton, Ann was eager to return to the children she knew and loved at Saint Joseph’s. From July 1979 to July 1989, she was the Community Living Arrangements (CLAs) Director and took leadership of this newly defined service and its growth to provide community-based homes for so many. Over the years, Ann helped Saint Joseph’s to expand its continuum of services, remain current on ever-changing regulations and earn a reputation for high-quality, person-centered care.

For over 30 years, Ann has served as the Administrator of Community Services. She shared about this experience, “I take great pride and joy in my role in the expansion of CLA into 12 homes and also in the role I’ve played in the expansion of Adult Day Services.” She continued, “As part of the Administrative Team at Saint Joseph’s I have been able to be an advocate for individuals receiving services at Saint Joseph’s by my participation on various county and state committees. This position offered me the ability to affect positive change and promote the mission and values of Saint Joseph’s Center for the betterment of those we serve.”

Ann and Terry celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary on July 31, 2021. They have four children, three of whom have worked at Saint Joseph’s Center. Meghan is currently a Program Specialist with the CLAs. They have been blessed with eight grandchildren, ages three to 13 years, who have promised to keep her busy during her retirement years.

Ann has made significant contributions over the years to the growth and quality of Community Services including the addition of the newest program, Trinity Child Care Center, which opened in 2014. While Ann will be missed at Saint Joe’s, her legacy will continue to influence the mission and services. As Ann begins her retirement, her many colleagues, friends, clients and their families wish her good health, peace and joy.

Celebrating DSP Week at Saint Joseph’s Center

Joining with other Intellectual Disabilities/Autism Providers across the nation, Saint Joseph’s Center celebrated National Direct Support Professional Recognition Week from September 12th to 18th. Throughout the week, activities were planned to recognize and celebrate the important role of DSPs in providing Care, Concern, Compassion and Commitment.

A popular Saint Joe’s tradition has been tie-dying the logo t-shirt given to all staff. Showing off their tie-dye art is staff from Blakely Street Adult Day. At the Main Center, Stephen is pictured showing his appreciation to Lauren and Dana during one of the planned events.

Other highlights were: Spirit Days, online trivia contest, raffle drawings, mindfulness video, food and ice cream trucks, and a competition-friendly Cornhole tournament. Thank you notes were completed by residents with the help of the Dynamic Abilities Program. All in all, the week provided a chance for some added fun, stress relief, team building and, most importantly, a chance to say “thanks for a job well done” to deserving coworkers.

Lauren and Dana embracing Stephen, a resident at Saint Joseph’s Center during DSP Week

Adult Day Services Group participating in Tie-dye Day
Dear Friends of Saint Joseph’s Center,

It is always my privilege to add a message to each edition of Concern. My hope is that you will know how grateful we are to count you among our friends and benefactors. At the same time, I will ask for your continued prayers and support because together we are able to ensure the mission of Saint Joseph’s Center will be a blessing for one another.

Like all of you, our everyday lives are accommodating to the changes and challenges caused by the COVID 19 pandemic. While many residents, clients and staff are vaccinated, continued vigilance and mitigation strategies continue in response to the prevalence of coronavirus in our local community. We collaborate and strive to provide high-quality residential and community-based services that are person-centered while promoting safety and well-being for all.

In preparation for her retirement, Ann Rink was sorting through files and luckily found a brief history of the Community Living Arrangements which prompted the feature you see here. As this program grew and developed, so did all of those who lived and worked in one of the many community homes. We are pleased that this program continues to offer such a wonderful resource for so many. Ann’s retirement is a well-deserved milestone in her life. I’m grateful for her dedication to the mission and people of Saint Joseph’s Center. With her guidance and leadership, many Saint Joe’s milestones have been reached.

Like so many organizations, Saint Joseph’s Center is addressing workforce shortages. While focusing on the recruitment challenges, we are filled with gratitude for the hundreds of men and women, like Ann, who have dedicated their professional careers to serving others as an employee of Saint Joseph’s. Because we hold our employees in high-esteem, we have invested in wages, benefits, ongoing learning and other workplace improvement strategies. If you know someone looking for meaningful work, please encourage them to check us out at stjosephscenter.org.

In the next few weeks, the celebrations of Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas will mark our lives with gratitude, hope and joy. I pray that each season is a time of abundant blessing for you and your loved ones.

With gratitude and prayers,

Sister Maryalice Jacquinot, IHM
President/CEO