Aquatic Therapy Pool Reopens Following Planned Renovations

For nearly 30 years, Saint Joseph's Center has offered Aquatic Therapy as a modality within its Outpatient Therapy Services located in the Weinberg Therapy Building at the Main Center in Scranton. The 50,000-gallon, 20’x 40’ pool accommodates the area’s only dedicated Aquatic Therapy Program. To maintain proper conditions, thorough inspections occur on daily, weekly, and annual schedules. During a recent annual inspection, plans were put in place for significant state-of-the-art upgrades. New mechanics and fiberglass panels were installed to operate the adjustable floor. Pool walls were replastered. An updated Ultraviolet Disinfection System and replacement LED lighting were installed. The improvements were sequenced to minimize pool closure time. Without access for approximately two months, participants realized how much benefit they gain from Aquatic Therapy.

Tina Selvenis shared, “I have had two knees replaced and have arthritis in my back. I wouldn’t be mobile if I did not have the benefit of Aquatic Therapy at Saint Joe’s.”

The advantages of Aquatic Therapy at Saint Joseph’s Center are numerous. The adjustable floor, typically maintained at four or six feet, provides a comfortable height. The buoyancy of the water provides resistance for strengthening and offers support. The water temperature of 92 degrees relaxes muscles and eases joint pain. Mike Kane, Clinical Director of Therapy Services, says many, including those with chronic conditions such as arthritis, can improve core strength and joint mobility. Aquatic Therapy is proven to be beneficial and is an effective alternative or supplement to traditional land-based Physical Therapy.

Dr. Chris Brozena, Senior Physical Therapist, stated, “The maintenance program and group exercise classes are wonderful. In the maintenance program, everyone has had skilled Physical Therapy at some point, and most are continuing to manage a chronic condition. This creates a common bond among the people who use the pool, recognizing that they are not the only ones going through that type of situation. Many have become friends outside of the pool, with group lunches being common.” He continued, “What sets Saint Joseph’s Therapy Program apart from others is the staff who have different specialties. This team approach provides a friendly, knowledgeable, and individualized program designed to maximize the healing for each client.”

Deborah McCorvey, an Aquatic Therapy client, stated, “I believe the therapists have ‘cured’ my shoulder and back issues. Saint Joseph’s has the best atmosphere and the best therapists. I would not go anywhere else.”

In addition to Aquatic Therapy, the Outpatient Therapy Program offers Physical, Occupational, and Speech Therapy. Experienced professional therapists develop individualized treatment plans for each client, pediatric through geriatric. To learn if Outpatient Therapy at Saint Joseph’s Center is right for you, contact us at 570-963-1279. Medicare and most major insurances are accepted.
Saint Joseph’s Center names four Direct Support Professionals of the Year!

Jennifer Davies, Community Living Arrangements Direct Support Professional of the Year. Demonstrating Saint Joseph’s mission each day she spends with residents and taking the time to get to know each person is the best way to describe Jennifer’s commitment. “I love the residents. It is making a difference in someone’s life. I have always been a caring, outgoing person who enjoys doing what I can to help someone achieve their goals,” Jennifer said with a smile. She was also recently selected for the Saint Joe’s Career Ladder Program. “I am very excited for this opportunity. It will provide the education and training to help me improve myself as a DSP for Saint Joseph’s Center,” she shared. “Residents at Dickson City CLA are like my family. There is nothing I wouldn’t do to help their quality of life. I have learned so much from each of them.”

Tonya Lucke, Adult Day Services Direct Support Professional of the Year. Tonya’s passion for helping clients is inspiring and runs deep. “I love the connection with clients; it makes me smile and has taught me gratitude. Working here makes me extremely humble. I’m happy when they’re happy. There are so many touching moments throughout the day,” Tonya explains. She shared her mission moment which touched her deeply. Tonya says, “A client walked on her own up until she needed surgery. Upon returning, she was not moving very well. The therapists and staff worked with her using a gate trainer, and today, she doesn’t even need us to assist her. As she makes her way through the hallway, she looks for me and says, ‘I’m good, TANA!’ One day, I hope I get to see her walk without the gate trainer!” Tonya’s smile is infectious, and her positive attitude shows.

Olivia Heenan, Intermediate Care Facility Direct Support Professional of the Year. Olivia’s work ethic and philosophy for caregiving are inspiring, “Saint Joe’s really cares, values, and appreciates the staff,” she says. Olivia beams when she talks about the residents and how proud she is of their growth. “Watching them accomplish their goals or learn a new skill makes me happy. Caring for them is breathing for me,” says Olivia. She helps residents maintain contact with their families through FaceTime and phone calls. Olivia is a great advocate for all residents, helping to ensure that they are engaged in every opportunity like outings to local museums and exciting activities; her dedication to the enrichment of residents’ lives is simply awe-inspiring. She is honored to be part of the Peer Empowerment Program because it makes her feel good to know she is helping to onboard new employees.

Jennifer Dutkiewicz, Community Support Services Direct Support Professional of the Year. Jennifer Dutkiewicz is touted as “someone who will do anything for clients, putting their needs before her own,” says Michele Uhler, Program Specialist. Michele adds, “Jennifer’s professionalism and caring nature are passed on to new hires that she mentors—she is one of five that CSS relies on to mentor new staff.” Jennifer is quick to point out that CSS is a small department that takes care of so much in client’s lives like advising and guiding clients with their food shopping, cleaning, cooking, banking, and budgeting is combined with socialization opportunities like movies, attending concerts, going out to eat, and bowling. “I’m privileged to serve Saint Joe’s clients- the CSS Department is one of the best-kept secrets!” Jennifer loves what she does, and she shares her heart with those around her—especially those clients entrusted to her care.
New Home, New Possibilities!

Just a few months ago, Linda, Sarah and twin sisters, Dory and Mory, moved into a newly constructed community home under the supervision of the Community Living Arrangements (CLA) Department. Their enthusiasm and staff coordination helped to make a smooth transition. The single-story house is designed specifically for their changing needs. The new residence features wider hallways, open living/kitchen space, fully accessible bathrooms as well as an oversized garage to accommodate current and future transportation needs. Layout and design decisions were made to create a comfortable home where each will live their best life. A multi-year goal of Saint Joseph’s Center has been to install a generator for each community home as funds became available. Having emergency power during an outage, allows everyone to shelter in place with needs being safely met.

Being a valued member of the local community is one of the goals that the community residential program has for its residents. As the weather improves, getting to know local amenities will provide interesting opportunities. Developing independence and creating person-centered plans is also prioritized by staff who provide 24-hour support.

“We do everything with them,” says Sandy Beavers, a Direct Support Professional in the CLA, “From getting ready in the morning, making lunches, to going out for fun activities. It’s important for the ladies to make choices for themselves while we assist them however we can.” A trusting relationship forms between staff and each resident, who rely on the familiar faces assisting them every day. New memories and new possibilities are being made within this new home with many more to come!

“Riley Ray of Sunshine” Brings Smiles to Children at Trinity Child Care Center

Riley, Canine Therapy Registered and Certified Golden Retriever, visits Trinity Child Care Center weekly. Michele Johnston, R.N., Director of Trinity Child Care Center, eagerly explains some benefits, “Improved focus and attention as the children give Riley undivided attention and little faces brighten up with big smiles as soon as Riley comes into the room. The children reach out for Riley who is so gentle and loving with all of them.” Owner-handler, Diane Buckley stated, “The connection between a therapy dog and children with special needs is priceless!” Diane surprised everyone at Christmas by gifting each child and staff with a handmade puppy-themed blanket.

Saint Joseph’s Center Auxiliary

Saint Joseph’s Center Auxiliary recently installed Linda Breslin and Leslie Corby as Co-Presidents for 2024 along with Board members seated from left: Kathleen Timlin, Theresa Gilhooley, Marylou Grogan, Lindsay Evans, Linda Breslin, Sister Maryalice Jacquinot, IHM, Leslie Corby, Robbie Timlin, Cindy Hoban, Mauri Olivetti, Judi Mahlstedt. Standing from left are Michelle Druther, Lynn Gavin, Maria Lawler, Maggie McGregor, Mary Griffin, Louden Corby, Molly Weber, Colleen Penzone, Nicole Costanzo, Maggie Mehall, Suzanne McGrath, and Denise Christman.

Auxiliary Spring events include The Night at The Races on Friday, May 3 and Sidewalk Sale on Saturday, May 18th. Plans are underway for the Annual Summer Festival on July 26, 27 and 28th. For a complete list of events or to join the Auxiliary, please call 570-207-6656 or visit our website, www.stjosephscenter.org, and follow Saint Joseph’s Center on Facebook.

Looking to make a difference in someone’s life? Join our team! Stjosephscenter.org
Dear Friends of Saint Joseph’s Center,

As I read the features contained within this edition of the Concern newsletter, the themes of mission, teamwork and community are so evident. Expressed differently according to the relationship or setting, whether it is Aquatic Therapy, Auxiliary, Community Residential, DSPs of the Year, volunteerism, or Sustaining Fund. Each story helps to share what we do and how so much is made possible.

The renovation of the Aquatic Therapy Pool and the development of a new community residential setting required a tremendous amount of coordination within Saint Joseph’s Center as well as with external contractors. As the projects were planned and implemented, cooperation was essential to the successful completion.

Through various services, the mission of Saint Joseph’s Center enables others to reach for their greatest potential. I’m so happy to feature the Direct Support Professionals of the Year from four departments. In recognizing their dedication to person-centered care, we learn about the many ways that they have professionally developed and remain committed to providing high-quality support that positively impacts those around them.

Saint Joseph’s Center is so blessed to benefit from the efforts of the Saint Joseph’s Center Auxiliary including the Board and many fundraising committees. There are fun events planned throughout 2024. You are always welcome to attend their events and volunteer at the Summer Festival scheduled for July 26, 27 and 28. Learn more by visiting the website, stjosephscenter.org or via Facebook. We are grateful to all who support our ministry through charitable and volunteer support.

May the season of Easter also be a time of grace and blessing for you and your loved ones. May promise and new life fill you with hope. May peace transform all the places of unrest within our community and throughout the world.

Happy Easter!
With gratitude and prayers,

Sister Maryalice Jacquinot, IHM
Sister Maryalice Jacquinot, IHM
President/CEO

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