

# FREE Times

## 40th Annual Celebration of Life Gala

On April 20 in 1977, FREE was founded with a mission to serve one of Long Island's most vulnerable populations. From our humble beginning, with one residence and a handful of employees, we have grown into an agency with more than 2,500 Valued Team Members that supports more than 4,000 men, women and children to realize their full potential!

It was amazing to be able to celebrate 40 years with such dedicated people. This year's Community Impact Award was given to Stony Brook University Partners, including the School of Professional Development, the Graduate School, the College of Business and the Career Center. Heartwarming speeches were given by Barbara Townsend, former CEO of FREE, and Clara Davis, one of the founders of FREE. The night also included spectacular performances by Danny Kean, The FREE Players Color Guard, The FREE Players Ensemble and Brian Calhoun. Thank you to everyone who has helped FREE thrive for these past 40 years!





# A Message From the CEO and President

Where will my son live once I pass away? Who will watch over him and ensure that he is safe? These are just some of the thoughts that have passed through many people's minds as they struggle with the news that their son or daughter has been born with an intellectual or developmental disability. Clara Davis, one of the founding members of FREE, decided to take matters into her own hands. She wanted a better future for her son. Her, along with several other parents, determined it was up to them to help shape the future for their loved ones. Forty years later and much progress has been made.

Back in October of 2017, Clara made it a point to speak at our 40th Annual Celebration of Life Gala. Emotions took over, and as Clara poured her heart out

at the podium, she began to cry – not about the hardships her son has had to endure throughout his life – these were tears of joy. She couldn't be more pleased with how FREE has evolved with the times, survived moments of fear when funding was threatened, and has grown into an agency that she can trust. Trust can be a hard thing to earn, especially when it comes to the involvement of those you care about. Clara trusts us with her own flesh and blood. She knows that once the time comes for her to move on, FREE will be there when she no longer can be. No award or certificate of recognition can ever come close to matching that feeling of accomplishment you get when a parent tells you this.

There is no single person to thank for this exceptional honor. It has been a collaborative effort

by hundreds, if not thousands, of people over the past 40 years to get to the level that FREE has achieved. Thank you to all of those who have been champions of our initiatives of inclusion and building strong communities. The relationships we have built with our community partners for more than four decades include businesses, schools, government, other nonprofit agencies and law enforcement who have provided numerous opportunities for those we are honored to support. Together, we are building brighter tomorrows as we discover and celebrate the abilities of all people. We have a true belief in our partnership and collaboration model connecting us to individuals of excellence. One of our consistent values for the last 40 years is honoring people's gifts, talents and passions.



**Robert S. Budd**  
CEO

It takes courage. It takes commitment. It takes a certain level of determination to stay the course when things around you are in such turmoil. So, we thank you, our Valued Team Members, our donors, our friends and our family, for your integrity, your commitment and for your unwavering belief in our value system and in our mission. We could not do what we do on a daily basis without you.



**Dr. Christopher D. Long**  
President

As the year comes to a close and we settle down to celebrate the holiday season, we ask that you please keep Clara, her family, and every single person that FREE helps to support, in your hearts. Take a moment to reflect on how you can make a difference. There are many opportunities to get involved, and it only takes one step to begin. Visit [FamilyRes.org](http://FamilyRes.org) to determine your first move.

Synergistically yours,

Robert S. Budd, CEO

Dr. Christopher D. Long, President

## The Chris and Robert Show Premieres

The Chris and Robert Show premiered on K98.3 on Sunday, October 8th at 7:00 a.m. Co-produced

by Connoisseur Media, the show features FREE President Dr. Christopher D. Long and FREE CEO Robert S.

Budd. The premiere episode served as an introduction to Chris and Robert, how they came to work together, and how they lead FREE together.

Going forward Chris and Robert will be discussing topics ranging from the employment of differently-abled individuals to finding forever homes for children in foster care. They will periodically have guests from within FREE, as well as FREE's partner agencies, donors, and community leaders; as well as taking questions from the audience.

"Our hope is to educate the larger public about what FREE does in a more informal and inviting fashion," said Chris.

"We're not here to talk at people," said Robert. "We're here to talk to them and engage them."

Additionally, Chris is looking forward to having such celebrities as Tom Hanks and Meryl Streep on the show, while soaring ahead in the ratings past radio pros such as Howard Stern.

But who would listen to a show called The Chris and Robert Show? A contest was recently held, asking employees to submit their ideas for a more catchy name for the new show. Marc Montano won with the name Speaking FREE With Chris and Robert.





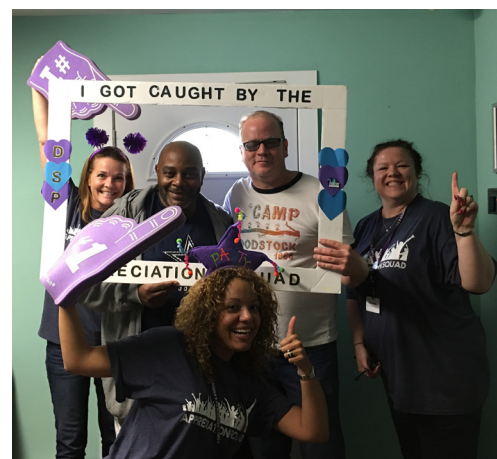
# The Appreciation Squad Shocks DSPs

Instead of just celebrating DSP Week, here at FREE, we like to go above and beyond. So, this year we took it a step further and held DSP Appreciation Month.

At each program, the Appreciation Squad, comprised of various members of the Leadership Team and volunteers from numerous departments, would arrive with the song “We Are Family” playing. They would come in dancing, getting the DSPs to join in and have some fun. Following their arrival, the Appreciation Squad would give them hats and cookies; certificates of recognition and thank you cards from Robert S. Budd, CEO of FREE, and

Dr. Christopher D. Long, President of FREE; take pictures and dance again on the way out!

The fun didn't stop when the Appreciation Squad finished surprising our DSPs in September; they still had a few more tricks up their sleeves. Once DSP Appreciation Month ended, the Squad shocked a few more people — the winners of the raffle prizes, where all DSPs were automatically entered! La China Allen won the 50-inch TV, Tiffany Cameron won the Keurig and Eileen Moritz won the iPad Mini. Congratulations to the three of you!





# Human Resources: Highlights of 2017

In 2017, the Human Resources Team continued its quest to provide the FREE Network with the best possible support and service. Throughout the year, the team recruited aggressively, simplified procedures, improved communications, enhanced technology, and explored new initiatives in support of the agency's mission, particularly our strategic goal of retention. Among HR's 2017 accomplishments:

**DSP Focus Group:** The Senior HR Manager began leading monthly discussions with DSPs to share ideas, give voice to challenges, and brainstorm solutions with the goal of enhancing the DSP work experience at FREE. Specific outcomes include working with the IT department to provide the DSPs with access to critical websites, and a clearer understanding of DSP perspectives on turnover, the importance of meaningful evaluations and professional development opportunities, and the day to day impacts of regulatory changes.

**Thank You Rewards:** Thank you; two simple words that make a world of difference. This year the Employee Relations Team developed the Thank You Rewards system. Under the program, anyone in the agency can nominate any team member for a Thank You Reward. The nominee receives a handwritten thank you card acknowledging their special contribution along with a small gift card. To date, more than 50 Valued Team Members have received Thank You Rewards!

**Group Interviews:** Over the course of the year, the Recruitment Team transformed its relationship with hiring managers from transactional to collaborative with the introduction of on-site group interviews. The group interviews maximize Team Member resources and allow the Individuals we support to more easily participate in the selection process.

**Mentorship Program:** In May, the first cohort of FREE's Mentorship Program launched with 10 mentor/mentee pairings. Each cycle of the program

lasts six months, with the mentees of the previous cycle become mentors for the next group.

**Employee Appreciation Event:** In June, Human Resources partnered with the Mission Advancement Team to host the first annual FREE Employee Appreciation Dinner. Over 350 Team Members attended the event. In addition to being a great party, the event highlighted the contributions of those Valued Team Members who celebrated milestone anniversaries with FREE (10, 15, 20, and 25 years), as well as those who made a special contribution over the course of the year.

**New Benefit Broker:** In August, FREE began a partnership with Mercer as the agency endeavors to align itself with new partners that allow us to use economies of scale to offer a robust and relevant benefits package.

**DSP Appreciation Squad:** In honor of DSP Appreciation Week in September, the HR Team and members of leadership made daily visits throughout the month to our program sites to distribute gifts and personally thank our DSPs. In all, over 80 residences and programs were visited.

**Management Training Collaboration:** In support of the Center for Learning and Professional Development's goal of preparing our managers for the challenges ahead, the HR Team introduced segments on interview techniques, performance management, HR policy/procedure and leave management to management training.

**Strategic Partnerships:** As changes to our external environment impacted the Network, our HR Business Partner continued to lead the way in strengthening the bond between the HR Team and our internal customers within the FREE Network. HR supported the Youth Services division by hosting a high school intern and working with him

to improve his communication skills. The Team also supported Transition to Work and Day Services Initiatives with the MercyFirst Youth Program, teaching interviewing skills to at-risk youth.

**Wellness:** Among FREE's Wellness initiatives were a blood drive in May and free flu shots offered at the Fall Forums. In addition, the agency partnered with a new EAP vendor, Carebridge, to offer a broader array of confidential services that support Team Member work-life balance. Starting on November 1, all Team Members will also have access to Health Advocate, a confidential service dedicated to answering questions, troubleshooting problems, and researching solutions to health care related issues for team members and their families.

**Communication and Technology Improvements:** The Recruiting Team streamlined its electronic applicant system (iCims) workflow and its employment forms. Access was modified in the Empower time and attendance system to allow supervisors to more closely monitor overtime costs and to support easier scheduling and sharing of available staff. The transition of the HR and Payroll systems to Agresso advanced with human resources going "live" on the system in June and supervisors being able to create and monitor positions. The submission of performance evaluations was made more efficient with the acceptance of electronic forms accompanied by a scanned signature sheet. This reduced paper waste, processing time for supervisors, and ensured that submitted evaluations made it to HR.

The Team is looking ahead to 2018 as we look to expand our wellness initiatives with a focus on being better educated healthcare consumers; roll out BenefitFocus, a web-based benefits portal that will make benefit enrollment, changes, and information more accessible; debut a new and improved Employee Resource Portal; and much more!

## NUMC Unveils Art Installation



Nassau University Medical Center (NUMC) recently unveiled the artwork of differently-abled artists from FREE. The artists were honored at an installation ceremony and reception, hosted by NUMC and FREE, at NUMC in East Meadow.

The first collection on display is called "The Good Earth," a collection of multimedia collages, created by Individuals participating in Fine Art and

Art Therapy programs at FREE.

The Sun, Wind, Rain and Earth are the four elements interpreted by the artists to create their original works of art. Painting combined with multidimensional collage work characterizes the unique depth of spiritual expression presented, with a center portal in each piece intended to channel the light.



# Talent Connection Job Expo

New 12 Long Island TV and FiOS 1 TV covered the Talent Connection Job Expo at Farmingdale State College. The event drew over 300 job seekers, companies, team members from agencies and elected officials. FREE, in partnership with ACLD, Life's WORC and YAI, hosted the event. The day commenced with a Community Partnership Forum welcome and introduction by Dr. John Nader, President of Farmingdale State College, and Dr. Christopher D. Long, President of FREE. There was also an inspirational presentation by keynote John Kemp, President and CEO of The Viscardi Center, an informational panel on supported employment, Employment Success Stories, and Top Star Employer Awards to model companies who hire people with disabilities. This year we honored Cambridge Art and Framing, D3 LLC, Chocolate Works, Costello's Ace Hardware, Panera of Bohemia and Hercules. The event also included employment workshops followed by the Talent Connection Job Expo and a press conference with remarks by Anita Dowd-Neufeld, Chief Administrative Officer of FREE, New York State Senator John E. Brooks and Town of Oyster Bay Supervisor Joseph Saladino presented proclamations to the Top Star Employers and partner agencies.



**Hosted by FREE, ACLD, Life's WORC and YAI**





# Behind the Scenes of Accounting



By Susan Dickinson, CPA  
Chief Financial Officer

In the last edition, we introduced the teams that manage the money as it comes in (treasury) and out (payroll and accounts payable.) None of that activity could take place without the group responsible for billing and cash collections. This is the revenue & reimbursement group. The team of about 12 is headed by Vincent Cona, Vice President of Accounting.

**Revenue & Reimbursement** – The team is tasked with billing for all of the services provided throughout the organization. In order to do that they must understand all of the funding sources, the rates and contracts, and how each must be billed out. The job doesn't end with billing – they must make sure that each bill is paid, that credit for payment is recorded properly, and that there is follow-up on amounts not paid. The entire team communicates with operations regularly to ensure that we maximize our revenue while complying with all requirements.

To get an idea of the volume of work, consider these facts:

- Total revenue billed each month for FREE and affiliates is about \$11 million, and

customer receipts of about the same volume must be recorded.

- There are dozens of different billing rates, which generally change two times per year, but can have multiple variations. The team must review and analyze these to make sure they are complete and accurate.
- About 40 contract claims are submitted monthly, most of which require copies of every payment made in carrying out the contracted service.
- The team works to get about 75 unique Medicaid billing files submitted each month, on average within 11 days of month end.

These tasks repeat every month, with a few really busy months when retro-active rate adjustments are processed or auditors are digging through the records.

At this point you have read about the transactional functions of the accounting department – the activities of billing and payments that support the operations of the FREE network. Each financial transaction carried out by the teams in revenue, payroll, AP, and treasury is recorded in the financial system – the “general ledger.” In any given month about 50,000 individual transaction lines are posted.

In order to plan for the future, we need to know what the financial picture looks like today. Although the information is in the general ledger, it needs to

be synthesized and organized. The team of **Reporting & Budget** is responsible for just that – each month they prepare and analyze a standard set of statements that help to tell the financial story of each organization. The reporting team, under the direction of the VP of Accounting, coordinates the analysis and review of the general ledger transactions to ensure that they are complete and accurate. They then assemble the results into financial reports for each network entity. The reports are designed to relay a financial picture to management – is our income (revenue) sufficient to cover our expenses? Will the organization have enough cash to meet its ongoing expenses? Are we meeting the targets we set in our budget planning?

The challenges for the team:

- They need to understand the classification for about 500 accounts and 500 cost centers.
- They need to understand the programs operated by each entity in order to evaluate if expenses are appropriate and complete.
- They analyze those 50,000 transaction lines each month, reviewing for errors or inappropriate classification.

Another critical support the accounting department provides is assistance with the process of budgeting – planning for the future financial stability of the organization. That will be the topic in the next issue.

## From the Parents' Perspective

My daughter, Allison, has lived in the Westbury house at FREE for over 25 years. Allison came to FREE after graduation from the Levittown schools. She was encouraged and guided by FREE to work in the service foods area, and worked at Fuddruckers in Westbury for a number of years.

As a young woman with Down Syndrome, Allison had a difficult time expressing her thoughts and feelings. Throughout her FREE experiences, she was encouraged to let her feelings be known. When her mother became severely ill, FREE was able to offer bereavement counseling. This, along with an exceptional staff, has helped Allison come to terms with her mother's death.

Allison has a wonderful relationship with her sister, her brother-in-law, and her nephew and niece. She has developed self-confidence. She is the one in the family who remembers birthdays and events in her extended family's lives.

Because of the wonderful support she has received from many of the staff at FREE, Allison has grown into a delightful and loved woman. Today, she works as a receptionist at the Old Bethpage office four nights a week. She has developed self-assuredness along with acquiring new skills. She has become a young woman of compassion and love. We, who are privileged to know her, honor her as a result of the love, devotion and training that FREE has provided her.

— Chuck Hyman





# Employee Spotlight: Patrice Radowitz

Patrice Radowitz, Public Relations Director, is responsible for developing and executing strategies that create and uphold a positive public image for The FREE Network. Patrice directs efforts to raise awareness of the organization's newsworthy initiatives by working closely with our operating and support divisions to develop public relations goals and strategies. She organizes press conferences, ribbon cutting ceremonies and program opening ceremonies, creates press materials, industry awards, develops partnerships and oversees media relations activities. By working and forming relationships with various members of the media and public, she generates new partnership opportunities for the Network, Team Members, and Individuals supported. She is also a member of the Public Relations Committee for the Interagency Council of Developmental Disabilities Agencies, Inc., and ANCOR's Communications Committee.

Networking is important to raise awareness of FREE and build partnerships. Partnership development is part of FREE's corporate strategy. It helps the men and women we support to participate in the community through new initiatives that foster inclusion. Relationship building is ongoing and partnership outcomes are realized over time. One of the fundamentals to a successful partnership is to identify partners with common interests and values to create a win-win strategy that is mutually beneficial for both organizations. The goal of developing partnerships is to enrich opportunities for the men and women FREE supports and expand the ways they achieve personal goals and outcomes.

Networking has resulted in partnerships with The LENZ Winery, several libraries including the Patchogue-Medford and Half Hollow Hills libraries, Johnson Controls, Girl Scouts of Suffolk County, and art exhibit opportunities at MacArthur Airport, Islip Arts Council and FREE winning the Nonprofit of the Year Award from the Melville Chamber of Commerce. It takes a team to maximize relationships and develop partnerships. In some cases initial contacts were a meet and greet and partnerships grew as FREE's Leadership, operations and day program teams participated. Interdependence among departments at FREE is key to success. Partnerships grow and evolve over time. It takes time to achieve the first outcome.

## The LENZ Winery

FREE's partnership with LENZ started with LENZ hosting an art exhibit in their wine tasting room. This year was FREE's sixth exhibit with the winery. The most exciting outcome is seeing the pride and excitement on the faces of the artists from FREE at the Meet the Artists receptions where they are honored in

front of their families, friends, FREE's Team Members, elected officials and members of the media. This outcome holds true for all of the art receptions we hold with partners. In addition, the art exhibits are also a form of employment for the artists. All of their art is for sale. This year seven pieces of art from the Ascension collection were sold at the art reception at LENZ.

The partnership with LENZ has grown over the years. In addition to hosting many art exhibits LENZ has partnered with FREE on art wine labels. This year was the fourth LENZ wine label with art created by FREE artists. This opportunity shows the gifts and talents of the men and women at FREE are being recognized by LENZ and introduces them to the community.

The next phase of the partnership with LENZ is our joint dinner fundraiser where the art wine labels are unveiled to the wine club members of LENZ, FREE Team Members and the general public. This is another great opportunity where the artists are breaking down boundaries. The outcomes with LENZ are giving our artists and FREE greater and greater exposure in the community and prominently positioning FREE and the quality and innovative services we offer.

## Melville Chamber of Commerce

FREE is a member of the Melville Chamber of Commerce. FREE won Nonprofit of the Year from the Melville Chamber of Commerce through our support of the Chamber.

Patrice was invited to join the Melville Chamber's Business Resource Committee. Through networking a new partnership was formed with Johnson Controls. They have a permanent rotating art exhibit by the artists at FREE in their training room. They hosted a Meet the Artists Reception attended by over 50 people plus reporters and a local elected official. Our artists are breaking down boundaries participating in the community and receiving recognition for their accomplishments.

The next phase of the partnership with Johnson Controls was an invitation for FREE's artists to design a mural for their training room. Ed Regensburg, Director of Art Therapy, is taking the lead on this phase of the partnership and has been instrumental in the implementation of all art opportunities.

Johnson Controls is a Fortune 500 company. We are educating a large company that potentially can support FREE in many areas such as fundraising, sharing their business expertise and connections, volunteerism, plus more.

## Girl Scouts of Suffolk County

In partnership with the Girl Scouts of Suffolk County we held a press conference to announce our collaboration.

The event was attended by elected officials and other dignitaries and the media. Patrice worked with the Girl Scouts Program Director and they developed the theme of "diversity" for the agenda of their June Getaway Weekend at Camp Edey. The event gave our men and women in the Drum Corps and Community Chorus the opportunity to perform and our Speakers Bureau to present to over 100 Girl Scouts, troop leaders and family members who attended Getaway Weekend. The positive outcome was that we were able to educate young people on diversity and acceptance of people who are differently-abled. Patrice also worked with the Girl Scouts to create gardens at two FREE residences. FREE is educating young people on diversity and acceptance of people who are differently-abled. The Girl Scouts are learning how to give back to the community.

Other outcomes with the Girl Scouts of Suffolk County: a Girl Scout Troop volunteers with Caitlin Eamotte's afterschool program. They help with arts and crafts and other projects.

FREE's PWW program volunteers at the Girl Scouts headquarters and works on projects dealing with their cookie drive, among other projects. Jenna Felder is responsible for the PWW partnerships that give our Individuals an opportunity to be in the community.

## MacArthur Airport

Patrice uncovered and planted the seed for a significant business opportunity for Terry's Café with LI MacArthur Airport. Through her relationship with a contact at the airport, they brainstormed the idea of having Terry's Café provide a food concession at the airport. Greg Varro ran with the opportunity and developed it. Stephanie Lewis is working on implementation. The outcome of this opportunity will provide employment for the Individuals, community inclusion and will raise awareness of FREE to over 1 million visitors of the airport.

FREE also held several art exhibits at the airport, where one developed into a new partnership with the Islip Arts Council. We expect to partner on initiatives with them in the future.





# FREE Participates in Annual SANYS Conference

The FREE Team participated in the Self Advocacy Association of New York State's (SANYS) Annual Regional Conference. This year's theme was "Preserving Our Advocacy in Challenging Times." The FREE Players Ensemble provided the conference attendees with an amazing performance! Matthew Kuriloff, Manager of Development, Public Relations and Advocacy, East End Disability Associates; Angel Athenas, FREE To BE Vice President; John Ginther,

FREE To BE Greeter; and Claire Miller, FREE To BE Facilitator, presented a workshop on PrideAbility, the NYS LGBTQIA initiative funded by the NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council. Congratulations to the SANYS Team for putting together a fabulous Long Island Advocacy Event!

To learn more about the FREE To BE advocacy group, please contact Claire Miller at 516-870-1645 or [CMiller02@FamilyRes.org](mailto:CMiller02@FamilyRes.org).



## Upcoming PrideAbility Workshops

**January 9, 2018**

Region 5 – 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
Suffolk County Health Dept.  
William J. Lindsay County Complex  
Bldg. CO16, 725 Veterans Memorial Hwy.  
Smithtown, NY

**January 17, 2018**

Region 4 – 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.  
PRIDE Center of Staten Island  
25 Victory Blvd., 3rd Floor, Staten Island, NY

**February 27, 2018**

Region 5 – 4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.  
FREE To BE Self-Advocacy Group  
FREE  
191 Bethpage-Sweet Hollow Road  
Old Bethpage, NY

Follow us on Facebook @PrideAbility

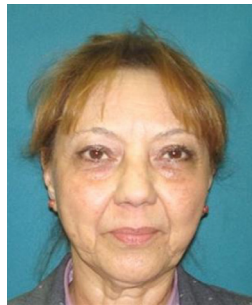
## The HR Corner

**Train-ing: (noun) the action of teaching a person or animal a particular skill or type of behavior**

Training is essential to the achievements of a business. The training process molds the thinking of employees and leads to quality performance of employees.

Quality performance is exactly what we got the day Carmen Succar (pictured here), sprang into action and relied upon the training she learned in First Aid/CPR.

One summer day in August, Carmen was doing what she does best; teaching the men and women we are privileged to serve the skills necessary to become as independent as possible. Carmen and one of the women she was working with had just returned from the vending machine. The young lady had purchased a bag of pretzels for a snack, and upon her return to the classroom began to eat them. Carmen was initially working with another individual, but always in tune to her participants, heard Sally coughing. Then the coughing stopped! Carmen did not



Carmen Succar

hesitate; she quickly ran to Sally's rescue and went right in to what she was trained to do. She repeatedly called Sally's name, and told her she was going to perform abdominal thrusts. As a result, Sally was able to expel the pretzel that was preventing her from breathing.

If it was not for Carmen's commitment to attend her annual trainings and her commitment to the program participants, Sally may not be with us today.

Carmen Succar, DSP for Day Services West since 1994, recently wanted to retire, but because of her commitment to the men and women she has worked with for so long could not fully leave.

Carmen elected to stay on with Day Services in a relief capacity, yet continues to ensure she maintains her trainings.

First Aid/CPR is a great skill to have if you have not taken this course. Now is a good time to contact our Center for Learning and Professional Development and enroll in a class. You never know when you might save someone's life.

## Support Us When You Shop

The holidays are fast approaching! This season, we are asking all of our friends, families and supporters to select Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc. (FREE) as the charity of their choice when shopping through AmazonSmile. To get started, visit [smile.amazon.com/ch/11-2420547](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/11-2420547).







# First Annual Employee Appreciation Event

At our recent Employee Appreciation Event, held at the Mansion at Oyster Bay, the evening was bursting with the diverse gifts and talents of our celebrated Valued Team Members! Whatever our role, only when we come together as one can we continue to provide the best support system for the individuals we serve. As we continue to grow and make strides toward a better world, you can feel the positive energy in the air embracing all of the wonderful things that have yet to come.





# Treasure Town Bringing Smiles

Every year, Treasure Town takes requests from Valued Team Members to assist them with sending their children back to school.



Using monetary funds donated by fellow co-workers, Treasure Town was able to purchase more than 500 backpacks this year, along with tons of supplies that any child will need to return to school.

Special thanks to everyone who contributes money to Treasure Town, as well as Pat Hogan, Celeste Lipski, Lori-Jean Farrell, Stephanie Celardo, Matthew Giantempo, Damien Monaco, Danielle Celardo, Nancy Cohen, Kathy Thumudo, Cindy Werner, Tracy Sweet,



Marc Montano, members of Swept FREE, Joe Jankowski, Patrice Radowitz, Lisa McDonald, Randi Gustitus, Kate Speckin, Eric Altshuler, Ryan Donnelly, Booker Hucks, Anajah Brown, Stefanie Russo, Veronica Garcia, Lindsay D., Doretta W. and Steven B. for donating their time to make this possible.

Treasure Town was also able to provide Valued Team Members with approximately 275 costumes this year, putting huge smiles on the children's faces that received them.

With the upcoming holiday season, Treasure Town will also be donating gift cards for local grocery stores so that Valued Team Members in need can provide their families with hot meals on these cold days, warming up not only their loved ones, but also their hearts.

If you are a Valued Team Member that would like to start donating to Treasure Town, please contact Nicole Esposito at 516-870-1697 or [NEsposito@FamilyRes.org](mailto:NEsposito@FamilyRes.org).







## Artists Honored at LENZ Winery Reception

Artists participating in FREE's Fine Art and Art Therapy Programs, who had their works exhibited at The LENZ Winery, were honored at a "Meet the Artists" reception at LENZ. Attendees were able to meet the artists and hear them speak about their work from the exhibit *Ascension*.

"We're thrilled to continue our special partnership with LENZ," said Robert S. Budd, CEO, FREE. "We have talented artists at FREE, and LENZ understands the importance of providing our artists with a venue to show their work, and for that we are thankful."

*Ascension* is FREE's second professionally juried competition of artwork created by the artists of FREE. Over 40 paintings were submitted to this year's competition! The artists represented are the finalists whose quality of work "rose high" to have garnered entrance into this glorious collection. Eighteen Tier One pieces were selected along with First, Second and Third place winners by esteemed judge, Kevin Larkin, Director of the b.j. spoke gallery in Huntington, and award-winning artist.

You are witness to the enormous courage and strength needed to take on the challenge of creating a free

form abstract painting. Throughout the eleven months it took to complete the process, weekly emotional and spiritual self-revelation spiraled FREE's artists to ever mounting artistic heights allowing them to find their voices and "talk to us" through the mystical, hidden language of images, colors and symbols. "Ascension" consists of wide ranging depictions of different elements of nature. Skies, land forms, water and other natural elements span across all of the canvases displaying the artists' connection to our world and the pathway to creativity. The artists worked through nine stages of creation, from beginning

sketches in pencil to learning how to handle pastels, water colors and finally acrylic paints.

While the artwork is beautiful to look at, it is important to recognize the incredible depth of emotional release, intellectual learning and work skills development that took place over months of work with all of FREE's dedicated staff. It was their patience and unerring commitment to "stay the course" and believe that FREE's artists could reach high to not only "see their healing image," but also commit it to permanent form for all to share in their vision.

## FREE and LENZ Winery Unveil New Wine Label

FREE and The LENZ Winery hosted a wine tasting dinner where they unveiled their latest collaboration, a wine label featuring a piece designed by Desiree, an artist supported by FREE, entitled "Hurricane," which is being featured on a 2016 Rosé and is a part of the *Ascension* collection. The wine tasting dinner and unveiling were held at PRIME: An American Kitchen & Bar in Huntington.

"We are excited to continue our very special partnership with LENZ. They have long been a supporter of FREE, and have hosted a number of showcases for artwork created by members of FREE's art program," said Robert S. Budd, CEO, FREE. "This latest collaboration is a beautiful example of the power of art, and its ability to transcend boundaries."





# FREE SPORTS

## Yo-Yo Monroe and Derrick Adkins Inspire All

The first annual Sports Day kicked off with The FREE Players Ensemble performing “The Star-Spangled Banner,” “Overload” and “The Greatest.”

Derrick R. Adkins spoke first, captivating the audience with tales of how he worked hard and practiced consistently to rise to the ranks of being a gold medal Olympic champion.

Following his touching story, Gold Medalist Yolanda “Yo-Yo” Monroe explained to the crowd how she managed to make a name for herself in a sport that is predominantly male. Both agreed that the key to their suc-

cess was perseverance and never giving up. Although it may have taken them many years of practice, they are now gold medal winners, and no one can ever take that away from them.

After, Yo-Yo and her teammate, Anthony Jones, professional handball player, gave demonstrations and lessons on how to play both handball and pickle ball. Once the rules were explained and our Individuals got a feel for the sports, Yo-Yo and Anthony brought members from the audience onto the playing field where they got to practice with these extremely talented athletes.

The day concluded with a raffle, where people won handballs and pickle balls signed by Yo-Yo.

A week later, Yo-Yo and Anthony returned – this time to take a moment

to spend with the youth who attended November’s monthly Stop the Bounce meeting. They also got to participate in an interactive discussion and demonstration in both sports.



### FREE Lightning/Facilities 8th Annual Bocce Invitational Game

Recently, the FREE Lighting Team/Facilities Division Team’s 8th Annual Bocce Invitational Game and Supper was held at Sipp Ave. Both teams came away with wins and enjoyed a delicious supper and social time.



# FREE SPORTS



## NY Special Olympics

The FREE Lightning Track Team participated in the NY Special Olympics at Siena College in Albany, NY. They were there to compete in the 50M and 100M Dash, 400M Speed Walk, Softball Throw and Javelin Throw. They won gold, silver, bronze and ribbons in all these events.



## Volleyball Champions

At the end of the season, the FREE Avengers took the trophy away from FREE Money with a score of 15 to 12. Congratulations FREE Avengers!!!



## FREE Theatre Panthers Win First Place

The FREE Theatre Panthers won the first place championship in the LI Day Services Game at DDI. They beat the DDI Tigers with a score of 37 to 36 in a very exciting game after an intense five minutes of overtime. Congratulations Panthers!!!



## FREE Nation Take on the AthleTeqs in the Playoffs

Sadly, the FREE Nation softball team lost in the playoffs to the top seeded AthleTeqs by a score of 12-6. But, this hasn't dampened their spirits, especially with the huge crowd from FREE cheering them on. It was truly a wonderful season! First and foremost, they had fun, but they also got to build on relationships and welcome new team members to the fray. FREE Nation would like to thank everyone for their commitment and dedication to the team! This was their second season and second straight trip to the playoffs. FREE Nation is looking forward to many more awesome seasons!



# Network Happenings



**SKILLS UNLIMITED, INC.**

## FUNDRAISER TO BENEFIT SKILLS UNLIMITED

Recently, a Zumba fundraiser was held at Retro Fitness with monies raised to benefit the remodeling and improvements to the Skills Unlimited facility. Besides just the Zumba class, raffles were also held to raise extra funds. Overall, the fundraiser was a great success! Thanks to everyone who donated their time and money.



## SMILE FARMS AT SKILLS UNLIMITED BLOOMS ON LONG ISLAND

Smile Farms, a non-profit founded by the McCann family in 2015 dedicated to providing meaningful job opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities, held a ribbon cutting ceremony at its newest location, for Smile Farms at Skills Unlimited.

Smile Farms has teamed up with Skills Unlimited to create an urban farm with 24 raised garden beds which will be farmed and tended to by adults with developmental disabilities from the organization's vocational training program. In addition, Smile Farms at Skills Unlimited includes an on-site farm stand to sell the produce and plants grown in the gardens. Smile Farms at Skills Unlimited will employ 10 individuals

from the vocational training program providing them with meaningful job opportunities and skills to participate in their local communities. This is Smile Farms' fourth farm and garden location providing meaningful work for individuals with developmental disabilities.

With 80% of adults with developmental disabilities unemployed throughout the United States, Smile Farms at Skills Unlimited is working to decrease this number by providing employment training in agricultural settings, and by providing employment at the facility. By partnering with others and bringing together innovators and makers of change – Smile Farms at Skills Unlimited is helping to create a movement that nurtures a world where people with differing abilities are always included and employed.

**PRONTO**  
People Helping People  
of Long Island Inc.

## PRONTO PREPARES TO HELP THOSE IN NEED FOR THANKSGIVING

Pronto of Long Island, Inc. recently held a press conference to ask the public for food donations for the upcoming Thanksgiving season. Last year, Pronto helped feed over 740 families for Thanksgiving, and they expect the need to be even greater this year.

Pronto also received a generous grant

from the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY). The grant made it possible for Pronto to upgrade and update their computer infrastructure with new computers and a computer lab. This will allow Pronto to offer bilingual computer classes, as well as provide citizenship classes. The DASNY Grant also allowed Pronto to install solar power, make parking lot pavement improvements, install new energy efficient lighting inside the building and warehouse, purchase a forklift for the warehouse, purchase new refrigerators in the warehouse, as well as carpeting and painting.



**ADELANTE**  
of Suffolk County, Inc.  
A Multiservice Community Resource

## AT&T PRESENTS \$10,000 DONATION TO ADELANTE

Adelante of Suffolk County, Inc. was recently presented with a \$10,000 donation by AT&T. The purpose of the contribution is to support a college preparation program that helps underserved high school students prepare for post-secondary

education by offering campus tours and assistance with the college application and financial aid processes.

AT&T's support for Adelante is part of the company's legacy of supporting educational programs focused on STEM disciplines in New York through AT&T Aspire, the company's signature \$400 million philanthropic initiative that drives innovation in education by bringing diverse resources to bear on the issue including funding, technology, employee volunteerism and mentoring.



# Giving Thanks on Thanksgiving

What began as a day of giving thanks for the blessing of the harvest and of the preceding year, Thanksgiving has evolved into a time when people show their gratitude for all of the amazing parts of their life that they are so grateful to have. For the people at FREE, this is no exception. It takes true wisdom to understand what you have been blessed with, and the many Individuals we serve are proud to show that off.



## BedQuarters Provides Help to Those in Need

Since 2007, Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc. (FREE) has been doing business with this family-owned discount mattress store located in Mineola, NY. Since 1989, BedQuarters has been a leader in home furnishings, serving all areas from Manhattan to Montauk.

Since customers are dealing directly with the owners, brothers Bill and Jim, BedQuarters can pass along discounted low prices on mattresses, mattress accessories, headboards, adjustable beds and furniture. At BedQuarters, the choices and budgets are endless. With more than 33 years of experience, their knowledge sets them high above the competition.

BedQuarters has always helped FREE whenever we have asked for assistance. BedQuarters has been extremely generous with donations for fundraising events and gifts in kind. When in need, they have been so compassionate and donated items for both Valued Team Members and the Individuals that we serve. Not only has this company provided us with so much, but in a pinch they have managed to get the donations to wherever we need the next day, no matter where on Long Island or within the five boroughs.

To further help out FREE Valued Team Members, Individuals, and the families of those we serve,

BedQuarters has allowed us to provide this coupon exclusively through the FREE Times.



### Exclusive Family & Employee Discount

As a FREE vendor we would like to extend our exclusive savings to you

# 25% OFF

Store Wide

Off List Price



**36 Months**  
Interest Free  
**FREE FINANCING**  
NO MONEY DOWN

**FREE**  
**DELIVERY & TAKEAWAY**  
Local Deliveries

**FREE**  
**SET UP & ROTATION**

**90 PRICE & DAY COMFORT GUARANTEE**  
See store for details



**Mineola** (516) **739-BEDS**  
(2 3 3 7)  
Warehouse/Showroom  
525 Jericho Turnpike  
(Off Ft. East of Herkimer Rd.)  
Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri. 10-9, Wed. & Sat. 10-6, Sun. 12-5



\*See store manager for terms & details. \*\*Free delivery to new customers. Delivery to other areas may be available for a fee. Delivery to Long Island City and Queens only. Free delivery to other areas is subject to availability. NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS.



# What Will Your Legacy Be?

Recently, Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc. (FREE) has been conducting ongoing seminars on the topics of elder care, estate planning, special needs trusts and charitable giving. While these may sound like completely different topics, all of them meld together because they are all part of the ongoing financial decisions you have to pay attention to. These meetings answer a lot of questions and demystify misconceptions about the aforementioned subjects. The one thought that everyone took with them is that whether

you consider yourself wealthy or not, there are still decisions to be made which affect you and your families. That is why planning is necessary, and the best tool for planning is education.

Attendees also realized the tremendous financial needs which Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc., and the National Foundation for Human Potential, face on a regular basis. That is why we always ask: Please consider leaving funds to FREE in your will. Remember, you do not have to fund the gift during your lifetime, and if your circumstances change,

the funds are still yours to manage as you see fit.

For more information on upcoming seminars, or to ask questions or suggest topics, please call 516-870-1661.

These types of gifts also make you a member of the 1977 Legacy Society.

For information and help in determining the type of gift that would work best for your unique circumstances, please contact Nancy Cohen, CFRE, at 516-870-1612 or [NCohen@FamilyRes.org](mailto:NCohen@FamilyRes.org).



Nancy Cohen, CFRE

The greatest use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it.  
— William James

## Speakers Bureau

The Speakers Bureau was established to empower the individuals at FREE by teaching them advocacy skills and to encourage the individuals to write and share their inspirational stories to educate others and to increase awareness of disabilities.

The "FREE Your Mind" Speakers Bureau includes presentations that foster understanding, respect, education and enlightenment. It will also provide presentations to school districts, colleges, professionals, families, recipients of services, and other groups on topics including, but not limited to, self-direction and empowerment, advocacy and awareness, the power of positive language, living with a disability, befriending the bully, and inclusion; customized presentations are also available.

To schedule a presentation, contact Claire Miller at 516-870-1645, or by e-mailing [CMiller02@FamilyRes.org](mailto:CMiller02@FamilyRes.org).

## The FREE Thinkers

The FREE Thinkers consists of individuals from FREE's OPWDD Day Programs. They work closely with the Self Advocacy Association of NYS (SANYS) and are active in legislative action. They have traveled to Albany and NYSACRA for events to advocate for more funds and programs to help individuals and staff in the Human Service field.

For details, contact Michelle Flood at 631-273-1300, ext. 3503, or by e-mailing [MFlood@FamilyRes.org](mailto:MFlood@FamilyRes.org).

## Family Advocacy Group

FREE's Family Advocacy Group was created by families with a mission to support our family members and each other. Family Advocacy meetings are held every quarter where we support families, share ideas and committee reports, and listen to informative speakers. We meet in FREE's Old Bethpage location from 7-9 p.m. and dessert is always served!

For details, contact Mickey Michaels, Coordinator of Family Advocacy at FREE, by calling 516-870-1694, or by e-mailing [MMichaels01@FamilyRes.org](mailto:MMichaels01@FamilyRes.org).

## FREE To BE

FREE To BE is a community of men and women with disabilities who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT). The support network is dedicated to socialization, advocacy and education, while providing a safe, engaging space for LGBTQ individuals, families, staff, friends and allies. We have established a partnership with The Long Island LGBT Network. We provide inspirational guest speakers, workshops, open discussion, social events, and educational and support services. Meetings occur on the last Tuesday of the month.

For more information, contact Claire Miller at 516-870-1645, or by e-mailing [CMiller02@FamilyRes.org](mailto:CMiller02@FamilyRes.org).

## FREE Network

Homes Anew I, Inc.

**PRONTO**  
of Long Island Inc. *People Helping People*



Homes Anew II, Inc.



FREE, headquartered in Old Bethpage, benefits more than 4,000 individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities, mental illness and traumatic brain injury and their families each year.



Follow Us! @FREEFamilyRes

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