

Mercy Matters

2019 was a wonderful year of change and impact! With the help of our amazing friends, there were many magical moments. Residents like *Cathy were able to participate in expanded programs and services.

Cathy is now able to receive horticultural therapy at her residence and utilize table top horticulture activities and for the first time, use a long handled bulb planter, an adaptive tool that allows anyone to dig a deep hole for planting flower bulbs from a standing position. Now residents can experience a year round growing season.

The Respite, Creative Arts, and Gifted Artists programs continue to help parents and caregivers alleviate stress through weekly Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction workshops.

Together, in the new decade, we'll continue to honor and celebrate nearly 160 years of Mercy Home. As we imagine our future and find ways to grow, become stronger, and enhance and clarify the Catherine McAuley and Sisters of Mercy traditions your friendship helps to make us unique.

We'll be reaching out to you to join us in clarifying the agency's long-term vision, strategies and goals, and provide a multi-year direction that will build upon current support environments in the 13 homes, day habilitation programs, respite and therapeutic services. Our Gifted Artists like Adam*, are now able to receive weekly one-to-one art instruction, because of a recent award of a \$7,500.00 grant from the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature. This funding through NYSCA's Special Arts Services Program will support JustImagine!, a new project which will foster meaningful collaborations between artists with special needs and typically developed local community artists.

Everyone continues to benefit from our new Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) program, Mercy Buddies. Thanks to the Fellone Accordio Family Trust, the Sisters of Mercy and many generous supporters, our Mercy Buddies



pet therapy program will offer a therapeutic engagement for our residents as they interact with certified therapy pets and provide a positive engagement for our individuals.

With programs like these, the men, women, and children we support continue to develop their self-confidence and independence. There is nothing more important than the good feeling of helping others and succeeding in the things you do. You allowed us to give that gift.

For that, we thank you.

Janice Aris

Janice Aris
Executive Director

*names have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals

Celebrating Sister Kay Crumlish

Mercy Home is very saddened by the loss of Sister Catherine Crumlish, 78. Sister Kay dedicated over 35 years of service to Mercy Home including 20 years as Executive Director where she was committed to empowering those who are marginalized, particularly children, women, and men, with intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, and other developmental disabilities.

Sister Kay was inspired by the Sisters of Mercy from an early age, where she attended elementary and high school with the Sisters and admired how they always “enjoyed life and had a smile on their faces.”

During most of Sister Kay’s early years as an educator, she served as a teacher at Holy Rosary Parish, then taught and became an administrator at the Dwayne Braithwaite School. Her faith and positive attitude, as well as her love of family, the Sisters of Mercy, and all things Irish permeated Kay’s life and ministry.

Sister Kay touched many lives. She was a mentor and her dedication and infectious laughter served as a guiding light for those who looked to follow in her footsteps in humility, strength, and unwavering faith. As a mother figure, she was adored by our residents, caring for them from childhood to adulthood with mother-like gentle kindness, compassion, and unconditional love, which Sister Kay spoke of learning from the residents themselves.

We will continue to honor Sr. Kay’s legacy and dedication to the mission of Mercy Home and she will be deeply missed.



“When is Ziggy Arriving?”



One rainy afternoon in Long Island, after a long day of activities, a group of women waited anxiously to meet Ziggy, a sweet mini-greyhound. Once Ziggy arrived, some residents shied away, while others ran straight over to him.

One woman came home from the day’s activities stressed out and a bit frustrated. Once she met Ziggy, all of that melted away and she immediately knelt to hug her. The women were saddened and surprised that Ziggy could not move in quickly. Every weekend, they ask “when is Ziggy arriving?” By the end of the afternoon, each of the women thought they were the dog’s favorite person.

It’s been amazing to see everyone’s reaction. Ziggy’s been able to visit Mercy Home through Mercy Buddies, our newest therapeutic program utilizing dogs and other pets to improve life outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

While sharing the news about the program to residents, we learned that Kevin* from one of our Brooklyn homes loves dogs! Throughout the conversation, he wasn’t focused and then he learned that his house would soon be visited --he went from looking bored to being fully animated and engaged. While participating in the Developmental Disabilities pride march, he met a terrier, and Kevin once again became energized.

We’re now introducing dogs and other pets to the homes, especially to observe the changes in our nonverbal and sometimes anxious residents. For residents that have expressed a fear of dogs, we’ll be arranging visits with a rescue rabbit and we are on are way to adopting a pet.

As the program progresses, it will continue to enrich more lives. The Psychology team is on site at each visit to observe behavior and each pet arrives with a certified handler. Together we look to Mercy Buddies to help build better lives for the people who call Mercy Home their home.

To learn more about our Pet Therapy Program or if you are interested in having your pet become a certified pet therapist, please contact Elinor LaTouche at elatouche@mercyhomeny.org

*names have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals

Mindful Moments with Lucia



In partnership with the William J. and Dorothy K. O'Neill Foundation, Lucia McBee, a certified Mindfulness Based and Stress Reduction (MBSR) instructor, has been teaching caregivers how to navigate through their emotions and find calm in a hectic day to day lives in weekly MBSR workshops. The workshops give parents and caregivers of children who participate in our Saturday Creative Arts Therapy program, the opportunity to learn helpful tips and tools to alleviate stress and find inner peace.

Q: How have you noticed the MBSR workshop has grown since its introduction at Mercy Home over a year ago?

A: It's been amazing to see the program evolve and provide flexibility for the parents and their moods and needs from week to week. As an instructor, it was important to come from an approach of understanding that families caring for loved ones living with developmental disabilities need to have sessions tailored.

For example, we recently added a component to make workshops more mobile for parents that have to remain within steps of their children. Now, after the full session, I head down to the main waiting area and together we practice short mindfulness and breathing exercises while they wait for their child.

Q: What positive effect have you seen as a result from the program?

A: There's been so much progress with the families as a result of these workshops. I have caregivers approach me after their sessions and tell me they feel they have become better caretakers because they feel more equipped to deal with the stressors they face.

A few of the workshop participants have even started bringing their kids along to our workshop and one parent even told me that every evening before bed, her young daughter began asking for the very same M Technique hand massage - a calming hand massage technique with essential oils, that was taught in one of our earlier sessions last year. She mentioned that it was a great moment for them to both practice mindfulness and enjoy their time together.

Q: What has been your favorite moment since beginning the MBSR program?

A: It's hard to recall any one moment over another but my job as the instructor is to guide them through their emotions and help to reconnect to the here and now. Seeing how these caretakers benefit at the end of each class, the gratitude they express for even having that one hour just to take care of themselves, as well as them expressing how they have been able to apply those mindfulness practices in their daily lives is a rewarding experience.

Sunday with Adam*

By art instructor and therapist,
Cici Ramirez



During my first art session with *Adam, we began by exploring face shapes and proportions. He then created a series of images following the facial proportions he had just viewed. Initially, he did not include mouths on the faces and after asking him if that was a choice he made or if he would like to include mouths - he later on added mouths. I found this to be very telling as he cannot communicate with language.

We then began to draw each other. I was wearing a very large puffy headband and a striped turtleneck sweater. Overall it was a great first session- very productive. In Adam's work, you will notice his close attention to detail - replicating patterns on clothing and even including a birthmark in my eye that even close friends don't notice.

I wanted to get a sense of what he was interested in so I showed him photos of a variety of portrait artist. He immediately gravitated to Picasso and Van Gogh. He would multitask, going back and forth between two images simultaneously. It became very clear that all images he worked with moving forward should be printed on individual pieces of paper, as he took the images in front of him very literal.

Looking ahead, Adam will be introduced to works of art from ancient Egypt to present day, examining how he interprets the art and creates his own take on what he is inspired by. I hope together we can work on expanding his talent through the use of introducing new materials and color.

As an art therapist, we have the unique opportunity to see the potential in individuals who have raw talent, encouraging them and aiding in fostering their abilities. I hope to accomplish and provide a therapeutic holding environment that is not only safe but challenges Adam as an artist. I believe an artist does not just materialize from traditional academic exposure, but an artist is an individual who not only creates but communicates through imagery in a way that conveys and reveals themselves.

Adam is an artist in the truest form of the word and I very much look forward to the conversations to come through the method of artistic expression.

*names have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals

Spotlight: Vincent Siasoco, M.D.

Being on a board and offering your expertise, talent, and time to a nonprofit organization is incredibly rewarding. In 2019, Dr. Vincent Siasoco M.D. joined Mercy Home's Board of Directors. Vincent is a board-certified family physician, Chief Medical Officer at the Metro Community Health Centers, and was recently elected as Chair Council for the Special Olympics of New York and their latest initiative, The Health Advisory Council, the first ever of its kind in the State of New York.

The Health Advisory Council was established to further enhance the health vision and objectives of Special Olympics NY. Along with understanding, embracing, and promoting the benefits of fitness, this multi-disciplinary council will strive to ensure inclusive, accessible, integrated, quality health care.



We are so thrilled to have a member of Mercy Home be a part of the discussion to further awareness and the rights of people with developmental disabilities and can't wait to see Mercy Home residents participate in this year's Special Olympics! Questions? Email us at info@mercyhomeny.org.

Welcome to the Board

Thank you for bringing your enthusiasm and expertise to Mercy Home by joining our Board of Directors:

- Tim Solberg, Vornado Realty
- Shea Hudson Kerr, S&P Global – S&P Dow Jones Indices
- Raymond Quan, J.P. Morgan

You're a blessing!

The generosity of our Leadership Circle* donors enables Mercy Home the opportunity to continue providing innovative programs like Plant-Grow-Give – a horticultural therapy and urban organic farming project, Creative Arts Therapy – an art, music, drama and yoga therapy program the provides assistance in the development in lifelong skills, Mercy Buddies pet therapy program, and Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction, a mindfulness workshop for parents and caregivers.

Anonymous
 The Accordino Fellone Family Trust
 Anne Albritton
 Neil Anastasio
 Black Productions LLC
 Pauline Blake
 Carlos and Diana Caballero
 Caring Therapy Services, PLLC
 Central Business Systems
 Con Edison
 Cypress Hills Cemetery
 FSC Foundation - Christian Brothers
 The Future's Project
 Hyde and Watson Foundation
 Lamb Insurance Services

Lisa Goldstein & Peter Nosal
 Jackson Lewis
 Knights of Columbus Hudson Council #3701
 Ridgewood Savings Bank
 Robert & Clare Kretzman
 Rose M. Badgeley Charitable Trust Services
 RSM US LLP
 Thomas and Allison Kurian
 Justine McGrory
 Casey McKee
 The McKeen Fund
 Merrick Pharmacy
 Tom Michaels
 Mutual of America
 Kyle Nugent

Fran Picone, RSM
 Plagiartist LLC
 Thomas Seminar
 Santulli Family Foundation
 Sisters of Mercy of the Americas – Mid Atlantic Community (Merion, PA)
 Sisters of Mercy of The Americas
 Skyline Scaffolding
 Studio One
 TD Charitable Foundation
 Alex Weiss
 Robert & Donna Whiteford

*Leadership circle donors provide a minimum donation of \$1,000. We strive to be as inclusive as possible and apologize in advance for any omission.

Mercy Home Happenings



Annual Elves Night



Melodic Soul Performs for Sister of Mercy of Parsons



Earth Day



Family Spirit Day



MBSR Meditation Session



Staff Appreciation Day



Mercy Day Luncheon

To Plant- To Grow-To Give Spring Fundraiser

Plant-Grow-Give urban horticultural program continues to bloom. Last spring, we hosted our annual fundraiser honoring long time Mercy Home supporters Father Michael Perry, Lamb Insurance Services and our Plant-Grow-Give dream team at a lovely evening full of dancing and dining with friends at the Prospect Park Picnic House.

Because of the unconditional support we received from event supporters, you've helped us expand our program and provide horticultural therapy to all our residences and our Saturday program attendees as well as create a year-long program through fall and winter seasons.

We're looking forward to an exciting 2020 growing season to come with support with from our partners at McKeen Fund, FSC Foundation, and Con Edison.

If you would like to see more photos from our June fundraising dinner, please visit mercyhomeny.org.

Save the date for our Spring Gala: June 18, 2020



Beer, Bourbon & Bites

The 3rd Annual Beer, Bourbon & Bites fundraiser to support the Creative Arts Therapy program was a smashing success. Guests sipped and sampled some of the best local brews, bourbon and foods in Brooklyn. Thanks to the generosity of so many of our supporters as well as our leading sponsors **Lamb Insurance Services, Mutual of America, and Ridgewood Savings Bank** as well as **Flag Waterproofing and Restoration, Procida Companies, The Aris Family, Lisa Goldstein** and **Donna & Bob Whiteford**, we were able to reach our fundraising goal.

Please visit mercyhomeny.org to see photos from the event.



Save the Date

APRIL 22, 2020

Earth Day Volunteer Day

In honor of Earth Day and the Sisters of Mercy's Critical Concerns, volunteers are invited to join us for neighborhood clean-ups and to prepare for our 2020 growing season.

If you would like to join us or learn more about sponsoring the project, please contact sjean@mercyhomeny.org.

JUNE 18, 2020

June Fundraising Dinner

Once again we look forward to celebrating our Plant-Grow-Give program this June at our annual spring fundraiser dinner and party. Interested in attending or becoming a sponsor?

Email Helen at hstewart@mercyhomeny.org.

Ways to Support

Donate

Mercy Home is able to support our amazing programs and services through the donations of friends and supporters like you. Contributions help improve the quality of life for our residents.

You can support Creative Arts Therapy, Plant-Grow-Give, Melodic Soul, or our Gifted Artists Programs in a variety of ways. If you would like to become a donor, please contact Helen Stewart, Director of Development at hstewart@mercyhomeny.org or via phone at 718.832.1075 x 121.

Donation of Stock Securities

Appreciated stock gifts can reduce your tax liability while providing flexible funding for our programs. Please contact us for details on how to make a gift of stock or securities.

Workplace Giving

Double the impact of your gift through your employer's matching gifts program. If you have any questions, please contact us at info@mercyhomeny.org.

Join the Leadership Circle

With a contribution of \$1,000 or more per year you'll immediately become a member of the Leadership Circle and will receive exclusive invitations to special events and receive the latest information and materials.

Planned Giving

A charitable bequest is a wonderful way to leave a lasting legacy that benefits children, youth, and adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities. You may name Mercy Home for Children in your will, including our tax identification number (11-1666227), leaving either cash or securities.

A planned gift can also significantly reduce taxes, but it is best to discuss these benefits with your financial advisor.

To make a donation, please return the enclosed envelope or visit our website at mercyhomeny.org.