



# QUARTERLY IN VIABILITY

## VIABILITY PARTICIPATES IN THIRD ANNUAL CITY-WIDE ART SHOW

The people we serve walked through the art studio eager to see their own creations affixed to the white walls or cradled in clear stands on tables donned with purple covers. As they found their unique pieces, they pointed, smiled, and admired their work. Soon, they encouraged others to look, and graciously accepted the compliments that followed.

Oohs, ahs, and “I like this one” were common sounds at the Bing Arts Center in Springfield, Massachusetts, on June 28. Approximately 100 art pieces were on display and had been created by artists from our Springfield and Greenfield, Massachusetts, programs.

Showcased artwork offered an array of media, including pencil, and paints, such as pastels, acrylic, watercolors, and mixed media on paper or canvas.

“The art show brings the artists into the com-



munity and empowers them to realize they can create something and enjoy themselves,” said Amy Porchelli, founder of ArtSong, a mobile arts enrichment program based in Western Massachusetts, that has been working with **VIABILITY** for the past three years. “I feel like each artist’s work is a masterpiece in and of itself. I’m happy because the artists have the ability to create and express themselves,



Top and bottom: A small sample of the art work displayed at the Bing Arts Center in Springfield, Massachusetts, on June 28.

make choices on their own, be professional, and be a part of the community in a way that shows

art transcends for people of all abilities. I think we need more of that.”

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Tom, one of the people we serve from a Springfield program, said he loves participating in ArtSong and painting gives him an opportunity to focus on his pictures, block out the background noise, and concentrate. He had several pieces in the art show.

Nathaniel, another person we serve from Springfield, agreed with Tom. Staring at his painted picture of a beach with a rainbow above, he said he wasn't initially into the idea of painting, but Amy encouraged him and he enjoyed it.

"I have to say," Nathaniel added, "I need to start doing more of this."

*"I need to start doing more of this."*

- Nathaniel, artist and person we serve

To see more pictures of the artwork that was on display, go to facebook.com/artsongart.

The artwork is available for purchase. Amy had said following the June 28 exhibit, someone asked to buy the entire butterfly collection of 18 pieces, plus seven other paintings.

For more information about ArtSong, go to artsongart.com.



A small sample of the art work displayed at the Bing Arts Center in Springfield, Massachusetts, on June 28.

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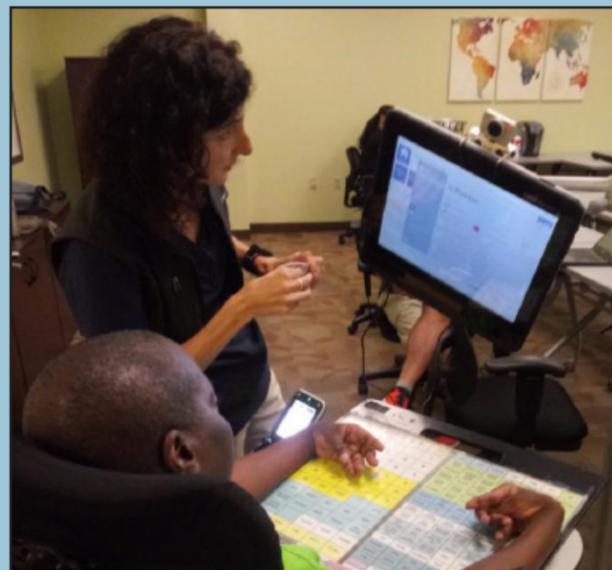
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## PYRAMID PARTICIPANT FINDS HIS VOICE



John, a Pyramid participant, works with an outside consultant to learn about eye gaze technology, which uses his sight and head movements to maneuver a mouse-like instrument to trigger a computer icon. When it does, an artificial voice says John's message. The two meet in the Kozera Conference Room at 60 Brookdale Drive in Springfield, Massachusetts.

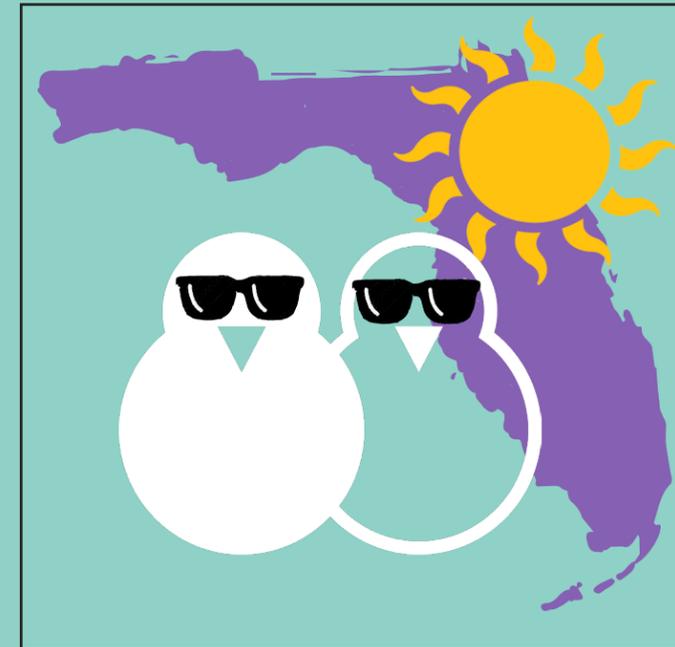
# IT'S OFFICIAL: VIABILITY HAS EXPANDED TO THE SUNSHINE STATE

Since early summer, new team member Leanne Rexford has introduced **VIABILITY**'s mission, vision, guiding principles, and training model for hiring individuals with disabilities to possible Florida affiliates. Yes, Florida. It's a new initiative following an invitation from Florida International University to create a training program in the greater Fort Lauderdale area, said former **VIABILITY** President and CEO Dick Venne.

"In addition, many of our national corporate partners have asked for our help from Miami to Orlando, including Walgreens and Sephora," Dick said. **VIABILITY** has also teamed with Walgreens Distribution Centers in Orlando and Jupiter. "We at **VIABILITY** look forward to building our newest branch throughout the state of Florida."

The **VIABILITY** training model is a nine- to 12-week program that uses classroom and supervised on-the-job training to enable people with disabilities to work independently and succeed in their roles.

"There will never be



*"There will never be a shortage of people who need our support."*

- Leanne Rexford, director of Business Development in Florida

said Leanne, director of Business Development for the Florida region. "It's great, because we already have a tried and true model with a proven track record in New England, so bringing what we already know here has been and will continue to be fruitful."

a shortage of people who need our support. Florida has so many options for this pop-

ulation, but none of them will encourage and empower them as well as **VIABILITY**,"

## VIABILITY CREATES A SAFE SPACE



Several **VIABILITY** staffers attend and display certificates following a June 27 suicide prevention training at the Kozera conference room at Brookdale Drive in Springfield, Massachusetts. The SafeTALK training, led by certified American Foundation for Suicide Prevention representatives, is designed to help our staff feel better prepared when responding to people who may speak of suicidal thoughts. The instruction included exercises to recognize the signs and apply the TALK (Tell, Ask, Listen, and KeepSAFE) steps to connect with a person who is experiencing dangerous self-harming thoughts before sending him/her to an appropriate caregiver.

# VIABILITY MAKES STRIDES TO BE “GREENER”

EVERSOURCE PARTNERSHIP LEADS TO UPGRADES, COST SAVINGS

We recently partnered with New England’s largest energy provider, Eversource Energy to reduce output and costs. To date, Eversource has replaced nearly \$30,000 in lighting and fixtures at two of our buildings, with no cost to VIABILITY. Additionally, the company also installed drive-paks in the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning, or HVAC, unit on the roof of our Brookdale Drive location in Springfield, Massachusetts. Drive-paks allow the component to run at lower revolutions per minute to save energy.

“Eversource continues

to support VIABILITY by helping reduce our energy cost at all of our properties whether they’re leased or owned, and we’re thrilled to have them as a partner of VIABILITY,” said former VIABILITY President and CEO Dick Venne. “Plus, they’re helping us reduce our carbon footprint.”

The alliance began roughly seven months ago when Eversource conducted an energy assessment on our properties. Following the audit, the company introduced an incentive to upgrade lighting and change fixtures at no cost to non-profit organizations.

Contracts were signed



The newly installed light fixtures at Lighthouse in Springfield, Massachusetts.

in March and materials were purchased thereafter. In mid-June, Eversource replaced roughly \$20,000 in lighting equipment at Lighthouse in Springfield and \$10,000 in lighting accessories at our Community Based Day Supports (CBDS)

program in Greenfield, Massachusetts. The new fixtures are flat-panel light emitting diode (LED) fixtures that are about 2-inches thick.

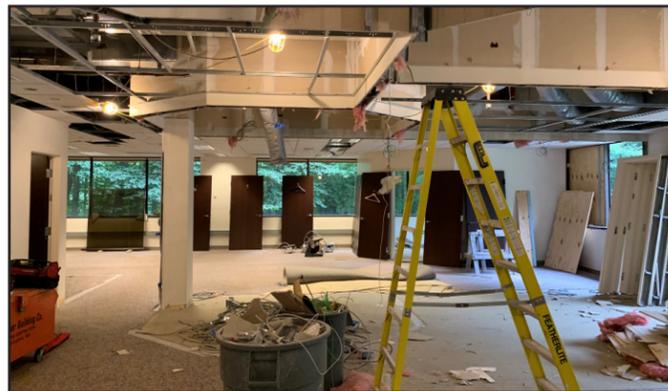
VIABILITY Facilities and Safety Manager Dave Rice said the lights have been well received.

# RENOVATIONS UNDERWAY AT CT PROPERTY

New building, new name, and a new adventure will soon unfold.

VIABILITY-Windsor, Connecticut, and also known as “Bloomfield Ave,” program is expected to relocate to 50 Griffin Road South in Bloomfield, Connecticut. Once there, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) program, which offers community based day and employment services, will officially be renamed “Treehouse.”

VIABILITY purchased the two-story, 21,000-square-foot fa-



Interior renovations at 50 Griffin Road South in Bloomfield, Connecticut, are underway.

cility in November 2018. “We are really excited about the new Treehouse program,” said Gregory Todd, director at the soon-to-be Treehouse program. “Historically,

treehouses have represented a place to meet friends, a place of safety, and a place to have fun. Our new and expanded program will definitely exemplify these qualities

and build on the foundation that was already VIABILITY-Windsor.”

Following the building’s April 9 open house, Dave Rice, VIABILITY Facilities and Safety manager, said construction crews have demolished the inside of the building and are currently working on framing new rooms, doing electrical work, and setting up a new fob, or keyless, entry system.

“It’s a bigger and bright new space,” Dave said. “It’ll be a better environment and set off away from the main road.”

# VIABILITY FLOOR CLEANING IS AT YOUR SERVICE

VIABILITY Floor Cleaning is now open and accepting new commercial and residential customers. Since its soft launch in the spring, the Pioneer Valley, Massachusetts based program already has work from a half dozen regular patrons, plus provides cleaning and landscaping services for VIABILITY programs and properties.

“We are so excited to be able to take care of our customers, use those proceeds to better maintain our own facilities, and provide training and employment opportunities for the people we serve,” said VIABILITY Administration and Finance Vice President Rich Horton. “It’s a win for everyone.”

VIABILITY Floor Cleaning currently has one full-time employee, Certified Floor Cleaning Specialist Emerson Campbell. He is an eight-year professional cleaner endorsed by the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning, and Restoration. Emerson had previously been employed by VIABILITY’s Zerorez of the Pioneer Valley, a for-profit carpet cleaning business based

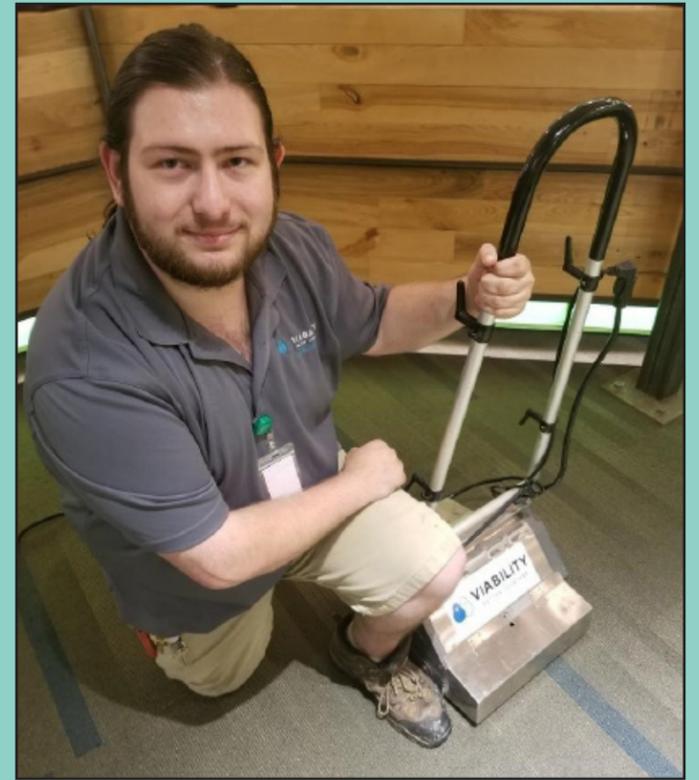
out of Holyoke, Massachusetts, that closed in December 2018.

In January, the facilities department drafted and discussed a business plan for several components, including commercial work, internal programs, and floor cleaning training. Staff also wanted to include in-house maintenance, interior upkeep on our vehicles, and upholstery care for houses within the agency to save money instead of having to outsource.

“Emerson brings a lot of knowledge to the table,” said VIABILITY Facilities and Safety Manager Dave Rice. “He knows about spills. If there’s a smell, he can pinpoint it and knows how to test for it.”

When Emerson worked for Zerorez, he received several online compliments, including “The whole house smelled great and the rug was restored to its original color,” and “The carpets look great, very reasonable pricing, great staff!”

VIABILITY Floor Cleaning services include commercial and residential cleaning,



Emerson Campbell, VIABILITY Floor Cleaning’s certified floor cleaning specialist.

strip and wax, tile and grout cleaning, water pumping, and monthly

cleaning service plans. For more information, call (413) 533-9370.

## AT THE FAIR



On Sept. 22, Jessica Seymour and Milla Dibble of 979 Dickinson St. in Springfield, Massachusetts, represent VIABILITY at a craft and fall fair.

## DID YOU KNOW??

VIABILITY in New York was awarded a 5-year Pre-ETS contract worth \$1.5M. The contract kicks off in January 2020.

## BETTER TOGETHER: 2 BROTHERS IN AFC PROGRAM REACH WEIGHT LOSS GOAL, EAGER TO MOTIVATE OTHERS

Jason and Josh, two of the people we serve in our Adult Family Care (AFC) program, recently achieved a significant feat and now want to inspire others. The Russell, Massachusetts, brothers sought to lose weight and improve their overall health. In a matter of six months and following the passing of their adoptive mother in 2017, Jason and Josh moved in with Tim, their foster brother and new caregiver, and his family, who showed the duo how to live a healthier life. They each lost roughly 20 pounds.

The duo began taking walks in the neighborhood, eating smaller meals, fresher foods – fruits and lots of veg-



From left: Jason, Tim, and Josh sit together in Russell, Massachusetts. Fajita, the family dog, a Chihuahua, sits on Josh's lap.

etables. Jason, 34, cut back on his daily intake of soda and cookies. Josh began lifting free weights, trying core and body movement exercises, and eating a high protein diet.

"I wanted to feel good in mind and body. The

more active I am, the more things I am able to do," said Josh, 35, who has mild cerebral palsy and developmental delays. Josh had been advised by his doctor, prior to his weight loss, if he gained another 40 pounds, he might lose

the ability to walk.

For Josh, walking came easy. He is already active. Two days a week, he works packaging soaps in a warehouse. He also volunteers doing janitorial work at a local veterans' cemetery. But for Jason, an avid video gamer and passionate comic book fan with cognitive limitations, the walks were not easy. Jason also has a steel rod in his back due to a childhood accident and must avoid falls and injuries.

Now, the men are familiar faces in the neighborhood.

"They've grown in many ways," said Marilyn Beardslee, **VIABILITY** Community Living supervisor at 979 Dickinson St. in Springfield, Massachusetts.

## BETTER TOGETHER: STAR LIGHT CENTER GIVES BACK WITH WEEKLY "COMMUNITY MEAL" IN NORTHAMPTON

Sitting in Program Director Evan Kreke's Star Light Center office in Florence, Massachusetts, Donna, one of the people we serve, spoke with enthusiasm and animation July 25 while praising the clubhouse's "a community meal," its newest outreach initiative. Her brown eyes were alive with excitement as she repeated, "it's an awesome program."

On June 28, four of the people we serve at Star Light Center and

staff arrived at First Churches of Northampton, Massachusetts, on Main Street armed with approximately 50 peanut butter and jelly, ham and cheese with lettuce sandwiches, and zucchini bread wrapped in environmentally conscience packaging, plus water in unopened plastic bottles.

For roughly an hour, they fed the underserved population ranging in age from young adults to the elderly in a takeout format.

They've since returned

every Friday, with different combinations of food and volunteers. They will continue to do so through October.

The idea for the program came about after Evan attended his monthly housing market meeting at Northampton City Hall in May. It had been men-

tioned the most-prevalent Northampton shelter was only open November through the end of April, and no longer providing meals. Other community organizations had begun supplementing food Monday through Thursday. But, there was a void on Fridays.

### DID YOU KNOW??

Four of the people we serve at Forum House are starting their own businesses.

## WELCOME TO VIABILITY A LOOK BACK AT NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATIONS



Employees caught mid laughter include from back row left: Justine Beatini, Felicia Brown, Rosa Goulet, and Dave Callahan. In the front row from left is: Tyquan Robles and Efrain Ramirez.



New employees meet for an all-day orientation Sept. 26 at the Kozera Conference Room at 60 Brookdale Drive in Springfield, Massachusetts. Employees include from back row left: Joanis Mano, Owen Clarke, Diana Mendrek, Jennifer McCarthy, Maria Leon, Nzhay Thomas-Norris, and Timmisha Carmichael. Front row: DeWayne Williams, Jovany Villanueva, and Luciana Bertoldi.



Ten of our recently employed staffers attended **VIABILITY**'s first ever new employee orientation July 25 at Brookdale's Kozera conference room in Springfield, Massachusetts. Employees in the front row from left: Cynthia Hoyt, Eddie Gonzalez, and Maura Crossman. From left in the second row: Leanne Rexford, Brenda Amuso, Omayra Acevedo, Judith Lyman, Amanda Anaya, and Missi Richardson. In the back row is Frankie Santos.

## SUPPORTING THE CAUSE



On Sept. 15, from left Eileen McKeever and Leonor "Lee" Maagero of 979 Dickinson St. in Springfield, Massachusetts, represent **VIABILITY** at the 2019 Walk to End Alzheimer's in Holyoke, Massachusetts. Fellow teammate Milla Dibble participated in the walk.

# VIABILITY RECEIVES 10 NEW MINIBUSES

In the forthcoming fiscal year, several new additions to the **VIABILITY** fleet will be seen on the streets of Western Massachusetts. Our transportation department recently acquired 10 new minibuses as part of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (DOT) community grant program.

The 2019 E450 Super Duty vehicles are parked at our Brookdale Drive location in Springfield, Massachusetts, and used to transport the people we serve in our Pyramid and Springfield Employment Training Support (ETS) and Community Based Day Support (CBDS) programs. The minibuses hold 12 individuals and two wheelchairs.

"They're really nice and the minibuses are so much easier to drive. The transit vans are very difficult in the snow," said Will Young, lead driver. "And, the



*One of our new minibuses at the Brookdale Drive, Springfield, Massachusetts, parking lot in late June.*

minibuses have the 'new car' smell."

To qualify to receive the minibuses, the community grant application required information about our agency, people we serve, areas served, and where the vehicles would travel and for what purposes. The state then reviewed the applicants' information and determined an agency's needs.

**VIABILITY** Transportation Regional Director Aimee Bell said our

organization requested 10 minibuses.

"I'm happy for the agency," said Aimee. "It's nice to receive the grant, because the state pays 80% and we as an organization pay 20% of the total cost of the vehicles."

While it's exciting to know the bid was accepted in its entirety, there is a lot of work involved to get the vehicles road ready.

The expenditures can be likened to winning a new car on

a TV game show. Yes, the vehicle itself is free, but insurance, registration, maintenance, and gas now fall on the responsibility of the new owner. In addition, our recently acquired vehicles must be outfitted according to our contractual obligations, inspected, and our 35 drivers must be licensed and have physical certificates to drive the buses.

This is the third year **VIABILITY** has received minibuses from the grant. In 2015, we obtained seven minibuses. Six stayed at Brookdale, while one went to the Tradewinds clubhouse in Southbridge, Massachusetts. In 2017, we were granted five minibuses all of which service our Pyramid program. This year the 10 buses awarded will be split between Pyramid and ETS Springfield.

## OUR MISSION

We believe individuals with disabilities and other societal disadvantages are an essential resource for our country's future. Our mission is to help build a world in which individuals with disabilities and other disadvantages realize their full potential.

## OUR VISION

**VIABILITY** will be a positive disruptive force in the marketplace leading the innovative designs of future service delivery for individuals with disabilities and other disadvantages to realize their full potential within their communities of choice.