



June

2022

THE EEDA READER

WELCOME NEW RESIDENTS!



Harding Street



Michael's Lane

EEDA is proud to welcome the women of Harding Street and the men of Michael's Lane to their new lifelong homes!

See inside to learn more!

EEDA says So Long to Gus Lagoumis

Gus is announcing his retirement after 23 years at EEDA. He arrived at EEDA in 2000 to manage the Community and Day Habilitation Programs. Within a short time he was overseeing Residential services, Individualized Support Services, Medicaid Service Coordination, and Clinical services. Many people followed Gus from his prior job including James Walsh, Joy O'Shaughnessy, Christine Proietti, Sue Jarvis, Luis Cruz, and many others joined the team. Some stayed a long while and others a little, but all made a difference. About that time, we began providing Crisis and Respite services, bringing EEDA into a competitive arena recognized as a full service diverse organization.

Gus made multiple contributions to growing the organization. Over the last five years, Gus left the program side and stepped into the administrative service side where he quickly learned and supervised Human Resources, Information Technology, Maintenance and Program Development, Transportation, Nursing, and Clinical services. I am pretty sure we are missing lots of other roles Gus filled over the years as he could really do anything, and has, over the past 23 years.



I think Gus is happiest when he is spending time with the people we support. He has helped so many people to live independently, navigated them through life's ups and downs, and encouraged everyone to do better and be their best. He believes the best in people just about all of the time.

One of Gus's favorite roles is being the ice cream man at the EEDA picnic. We are inviting everyone to come to the picnic on July 29th at Indian Island Park to visit with Gus and have some ice cream. We won't say goodbye, just so long.

Introducing

kinexion

A family of services. A lifetime of care.

Kinexion: Empowering individuals to live their best life, for life.



Pictured from right: Frank Lombardi (IGHL), Jay Silverman (CDD), Robert Policastro (Angela's House), Charles Vanek (Maryhaven), Barbara Senzel (Head Injury Assn.), Lisa Meyer Fertal (EEDA, IGHL), Marybeth Lichtneger (IGHL), and Walter Stockton (IGHL).

Kinexion is the management service organization (MSO) for an affiliate network comprised of: Independent Group Home Living (IGHL), The Association for Technology Dependent Children ("Angela's House"), New Interdisciplinary School (NIS), Center for Developmental Disabilities (CDD), Head Injury Associates (HIA), Maryhaven and East End Disability Associates (EEDA). This network positions seven well-respected organizations to lead the way in which we are able to provide lifetime supports for people with disabilities. This central organization is responsible for administrative operations and offers financial security as a collective 250-million-dollar organization, employing more than 4,000 staff members and providing services to more than 10,000 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities across Long Island.

Affiliate providers are connected through shared departments to support Finance, Information Technology, Human Resources, Corporate Compliance, Purchasing, Maintenance and Logistics. In addition, each affiliated provider will purchase services that Kinexion offers, affording them greater support from specialized professional departments at reduced costs. As a result, affiliated providers will have the best opportunities for continued growth and direct savings; so, money can be spent on person-centered services.

Inspired by research and feedback from people with special needs, family members, providers and community members, the Kinexion name connotes the driving force behind its affiliates, as well as the network of resources it provides to its constituencies. The tagline *A Family of Agencies, A Lifetime of Care* clearly identifies that we are multiple agencies offering the continuum of supports and services for people with disabilities. The Kinexion logo represents that in all we do, the network's philosophy is to be person centered.

Within the Kinexion network you will find a continuum of superior lifetime care that supports people with disabilities and their families and makes a more inclusive community economically viable and sustainable.

So we can all live our best lives for life.



ADVOCACY *in action*



For nearly ten years, advocates have been traveling to Albany to plead with lawmakers to not further cut funding to agencies

like EEDA who provide vital support to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) throughout New York State. There were years we warned our representatives that if current funding trends continue, we would see an unparalleled staffing crisis. Unfortunately, COVID-19 pushed our industry to the brink, and over the past year, we have been sounding the alarm that the crisis we have been warning our lawmakers about has come. In 2022, however, our lawmakers and the governor's office took notice. This year's budget did not forget our industry, and for the first time in what seems like forever, the budget includes a sizeable cost of living adjustment, or COLA. At the first rally of its kind since COVID-19, we demonstrated alongside champion lawmakers and state officials to say, "vote yes!" to this year's budget. Vote yes to funding our citizens with I/DD and the professionals that support them.



Stony Brook University

EEDA was fortunate to receive a grant from NYS Governors Workforce Development Initiative to collaborate with other provider agencies and contract with the Stony Brook University School of Professional Development to offer management training classes to cohorts of DSPs, frontline supervisors, and managers. Cohorts include EEDA staff and participants from local sister agencies. Coursework included Business Communications, Finances for Business, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Time Management, and Stress Reduction. EEDA staff shined in these classes as the brightest and most engaged participants. Each group was celebrated upon the successful completion of coursework and have been applying new skills in their day to day work here at EEDA. Participants also received a certificate of completion from the Stony Brook University School of Professional Development. Stony Congratulations to all who successfully completed this important coursework!



Pictured Left: Peter Saname, Allan Concepcion, Tyra Shephard, Victoria Morace, Elizabeth Rush, Kim Flood, Joy O'Shaughnessy, Danielle Devito, Greg Holland, Gus Lagoumis

Pictured right: Patti Maiorana, Samantha Fenoy, Shaunice Faines, Luis Cruz, Jeremy Grand



Pictured left: John Massa, Nicole Charles, Jacqueline Chavez, Cynthia Guigliano



UKRAINE



A local Riverhead group of Ukrainians collected items to be sent back home to aid in the current crisis. EEDA programs gathered essential healthcare and sanitary items that will be shipped over to the people of Ukraine in their time of need.



GRATITUDE LUNCHEON

at

HOTEL INDIGO®



March 16th, 2022 marked two years since the official start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Needless to say it was a very difficult time for everyone at EEDA including those who did not work directly on the front lines. EEDA held a luncheon at the Hotel Indigo in Riverhead to celebrate the efforts of the coordinators, managers and directors, and administrative staff members who pushed through the pandemic and made sure the people we support and program staff had everything they needed to remain safe.

The Executive team presented Terms of Service awards to longtime staff members; celebrated the accomplishments of the past two years; talked about EEDA's future with the recent affiliation with IGHL, and congratulated Sahlise Cherry for becoming a homeowner through Habitat for Humanity. The theme of the day was *gratitude*, and there was certainly a lot to be thankful for. Thank you to the EEDA family for recognizing everyone's persistent efforts.

TERMS OF SERVICE AWARDS



5 Years at EEDA

Joann Ainbinder (2015)
John Amaya (2015)
Florence Biot (2015)
Nicole Charles (2015)
Allan Concepcion (2016)
Samantha Fenoy (2015)
Dara Gary (2016)
Jeremy Grand (2015)
Peter Guido (2016)
Danielle Hanly (2016)
Lasheena Harris (2016)
John Hatton (2015)
Barbara Jiskra (2016)
Stephanie Koutsoftas (2016)
Amanda Kwasna (2015)
Kevin Leonard (2015)
Jaime Mescia (2015)
Marie Miranda (2016)
Tracy Pagliari (2016)
Megan Schaal (2016)
David Spinelli (2015)
Marisol Vargas (2016)
Kelly Weresnick (2015)
Adam Weyant (2016)

10 Years at EEDA

Charles Elsbree (2010)
Chris Pagano (2011)
Kimberly Schebler (2011)
Randy Willis (2012)



15 Years at EEDA

Myrna Aguayo (2005)
Christine Barker (2006)
Greg Holland (2005)
Patti Maiorana (2005)
Lynn Proietti (2005)
Terri Walters (2005)

20 Years at EEDA

Luis Cruz (1998)
Kate Danega (1999)
Sally Easter (2000)
Edward Henderson (2000)
Sue Jarvis (2001)
Diane Lagoumis (1998)
Gus Lagoumis (2000)
Joy O'Shaughnessy (2001)
Diana Parker (2000)
Christine Proietti (2001)
Laurel Weresnick (1998)



25 Years at EEDA

Lisa Meyer Fertal (1996)





In 2018, EEDA was awarded a development opportunity to provide a home for six young men whose families were looking for a permanent home for their sons. EEDA administration found and purchased a beautiful house on Michaels Lane in a lovely neighborhood in Wading River and began planning for the renovations it needed. The house was plenty big enough but there was much to do to bring it up to the standards that EEDA requires of all its group homes. Walls needed to be moved, a pool had to be redesigned, and safety features had to be installed to meet the standards set by OPWDD.

Meetings were held, applications were filed, and things were looking very optimistic, and then in February 2020, COVID-19 hit and Michaels Lane, like everything else in the world, ground to a halt. Contractors stopped working, inspectors stopped inspecting, OPWDD went into lockdown, and the whole world changed.

During the next year, EEDA circled the wagons and concentrated on our IRA residents and individuals we support through the Community Habilitation program whose residents live independently in the community. Although the Michaels Lane development was still a part of our plans, most of our resources were devoted to keeping the individuals and our staff safe and healthy.

As COVID-19 began to ease and we got a much better handle on the new normal, things began to happen at the Michaels Lane house. Our contractors came back to work, supplies became more available, and slowly, ever so slowly, the house was completed.





Our next obstacle was one of the biggest challenges that all nonprofits face in today's world. OPWDD would not approve the opening of our Michaels Lane house or any other house throughout the state until the provider agency could provide a schedule that showed full staffing coverage for the safe operation of the home. EEDA was already struggling to staff our current group homes and hiring twelve Direct Support Professionals, a Manager, and clinical staff to support a new IRA was a monumental challenge. However, with the combined efforts of EEDA's Human Resources and Residential Departments, we were able to identify and hire the necessary staff and the house opened on March 5, 2022.

Under normal circumstances, opening a new IRA is a challenge, but during the pandemic those challenges seemed insurmountable at times. But we were blessed with a group of families who were committed to the project and partnered with EEDA to see it through. EEDA is dedicated to providing a lifelong home for all our IRA residents as we continue to create opportunities for happy lives.



EEDA's former respite house sat empty during the pandemic, but on February 02, 2022, the house officially opened its doors as our new Harding Street IRA. Harding Street is now home to five young women, and it is EEDA's first IRA to have a pet Yorkie! All of the ladies have grown to love her as their own.

The Harding Street house has a huge backyard, and a bike trail behind the house where the women like to walk or ride bikes with staff. There's a 7-11 in walking distance that's also a popular destination. The women of Harding Street enjoy baking and cooking together—they even volunteer at local church kitchens! They also participate in a bowling league that they love going to every Saturday morning. We're so excited to welcome the Harding Street ladies to EEDA's residential family!



Women of Distinction



EEDA's own, Lisa Meyer Fertal and Joy O'Shaughnessy, were nominated for Assembly member Jodi Giglio's Women of Distinction Award. They received a complementary brunch at The Birchwood on May 22, 2022 and an award recognizing their many contributions to our community.

SAVE THE DATE

EEDA's Annual Picnic will be on Friday, July 29th from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Indian Island Park pavilion in Riverhead. Join us for sun, food, games, and a fond farewell to Gus!



EEDA Congratulates Sahlise Cherry, Assistant Residential Manager at our Marion Lane IRA, for being selected to receive a new home through Habitat for Humanity! Sahlise and an army of volunteers helped build her house in the Riverhead area, and her family will soon be proud homeowners.



On June 10th, 2022 the EEDA Volunteer army joined together and spent the day helping Sahlise build her house and her neighbor's house. The crew and Habitat for Humanity staff worked amazingly well together, putting up drywall and gaskets, which was rewarded with lunch and good feelings all around.

Enjoy your new house, Sahlise!



CARNIVAL DAY



To celebrate the beginning of spring, EEDA's Day Programs pulled together a carnival day, held at the Henry Pfeifer Community Center on April 15th. Program participants, staff, and families enjoyed a day filled with treats, a petting zoo, bounce castle, and a trackless train. A perfect day with perfect weather and great company. Who could ask for anything better!?





National Nurses Week



Top left to bottom right:
Sarah Gregory, LPN, Joy O'Shaughnessy, CPO, Deborah Arnone, RN, Franki Duggan, LPN, Kaitlyn Martin, LPN, Gus Lagoumis, CAO, Nadine L. Montuori, RN, Manager of Nursing Services (not pictured, Holly Hinderliter, LPN)

EEDA has a great medical team that includes Med Techs, LPNs and RNs. Our caring and problem-solving LPNs bring different levels of experience to each of the two houses they work with, serving as medical advocates who understand the intricacies involved with medical appointments. LPNs discuss treatments, symptoms, and medications with RNs. Nurses are under immense pressure as they balance orders from physicians, use their expertise to make judgment calls, and take a person-centered approach to help the people they support live their best life. EEDA is proud of our compassionate nursing staff. Thank you, EEDA nurses!

Administrative Professional's Day

Cheers to the Administrative Assistants on Administrative Professional's Day!

Jeremy Grand, Lynn Proietti, Amy Valentin, and Sharyn Testagrose were treated to lunch at the Birchwood in Riverhead, to celebrate all their hard work behind the scenes.

