



# The EEDA READER

## THANK YOU EEDA! All of your advocacy efforts lead to great results in the New York State budget!

The New York State budget provides \$72.4 million for the Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) to create new service slots, including an expansion of certified housing supports, community habilitation, respite services, housing subsidies, self-direction of services and an expansion of day programs and employment options.

### COLA

The budget includes \$51 million for human services cost of living adjustments (COLAs) across the OPWDD, Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS), Office of Mental Health (OMH), Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and the Office of Temporary Disability Assistance (OTDA).

## April is Autism Awareness Month



### KATE & COLLEEN



Kate Danega and Colleen Shanahan met in 2006 at the Calverton Day Hab. Since then, they have been together at the Creative Arts Program, Community Habilitation, and when the Henry Lewis house opened in August 2019, Kate and Colleen transitioned to residential life. Kate supported Colleen living in a more independent environment as she believed in Colleen's abilities and knew she would grow. Colleen said, "Kate helped me get over some stuff when I moved into the house."

Kate and Colleen participated in cooking and painting classes, beach walks, craft making, and sea turtle releases together. Kate enjoyed watching the Long Island Aquarium honor Colleen for her volunteer work and Colleen loved presenting Kate with a staff recognition award at EEDA's 2019 gala. They both mentioned watching the other be recognized as their most memorable shared experience. The pride they have for one another illustrates the character of their friendship. Colleen loves telling funny stories about Kate, helping her in the kitchen, and watching movies when everyone else falls asleep.

Kate is proud of how far Colleen's come since moving into the Henry Lewis house—she's working to be independent in so many areas, including self-care, cooking, cleaning, and budgeting because she hopes to someday share an apartment with a friend. Kate describes Colleen as "a continuous work in progress."

Together, Colleen and Kate have helped each other be more compassionate. Kate loves that everyone in the Henry Lewis house is learning life lessons and growing as a family. "Colleen's a very important part of my life," Kate said, "She's very loving, caring, inquisitive, compassionate, and she cares deeply for everybody. We try to keep it happy and have fun."

### LIFE IN RESIDENTIAL



EEDA's Residential department currently consists of seven Independent Residential Alternatives (IRAs), which are home to 48 very special men and women. The IRAs are located throughout the East End of Long Island from Manorville to East Hampton. All residents have their own room that they personalize to their tastes, and all their needs are met by EEDA staff on a daily basis. The IRAs are staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) who support residents as they live active and productive lives. During the COVID-19 pandemic, staff and residents of the IRAs have gone through the same challenges as the rest of the world—life has changed. To a lot of our residents, routine and schedules are a big part of their lives and having to change their normal routine was difficult. There was a time during the pandemic where life for those in the IRAs consisted of staying home and the only direct contact was with the dedicated staff who supported them. While many people in the world were asked to work from home because their places of business were shut down or not safe, our direct care staff continued coming to work to provide essential services that were needed in our IRAs.

