Partnership with Liberty Resources Yields Program Expansion

Thanks to our strategic partnership with Liberty Resources, AURORA has acquired the infrastructure and support to launch a new and vitally needed program: Health Home Care Management. This service provides people with vision or hearing loss with a Care Manager to act as a “connector and advocate” when coping with chronic health or mental health conditions.

As the health care system becoming increasingly complex and difficult to navigate, coordination of and access to health and health-related services and providers are the focus of AURORA Care Managers. We currently have a Care Manager for Adults with vision or hearing loss or both and recently hired Grace Allen to act as Care Manager for Children who are Deaf and Deaf adults with children (CODA’s) who qualify for the program.

Services include:
- Making and assisting with coordinating doctor’s appointments
- Accessing medical specialists and other providers
- Assistance with Transportation arrangements
- Generating referrals to strengthen your support system

Currently those who have active MEDICAID are eligible and who also have two qualifying chronic health conditions or a single qualifying condition. For more information contact Anne Costa, VP of Program and Administration at 315-422-7263 ext. 250.

Welcome to Our New Children’s Care Manager: Grace Allen

Education/professional background: I graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Community and Human Services with a focus on the Deaf population and am currently attending graduate school at Gallaudet University.

What you hope to accomplish in the position: It is my hope to see the Deaf Community gain access to what has been inaccessible for so long, such as mental health services. This position will help us to serve our Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and children of Deaf adults (CODA) with even more resources especially now that we have merged with Liberty Resources,

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an advanced and leading provider in the field of behavioral health care.

The barrier of communication has always been a factor in obtaining services due to lack of cultural competency and mistrust. It is my intent to help educate providers about our vibrant and beautiful Deaf culture as well as empower the clients with knowledge and the spirit of advocacy. It is also a goal to see Deaf therapists working at Liberty Resources to meet the needs of our Deaf Community.

**Describe Care Management in your own words:** Care Management is all about connecting the dots. It is giving parents, families, teachers and medical providers access to one another. From a communication standpoint, we will work together to ensure that children and families do not fall through the cracks, that they are safe, getting proper care, and all their basic needs are being met. Care Management is also a great intervention tool in terms of resources, whether it’s a crisis or a need. With our assessments, we can continuously stay ahead of the gaps and establish a healthier life for the children and families. It is a free service provided for Medicaid eligible individuals.

**How can people contact you for more information?** For more information, you can call me via VP 315-679-4115 or email me at gallen@auroraofcny.org.

**Hobbies or other accomplishments you would like to highlight:** I am a fabric and yarn enthusiast which leads to my love of sewing and knitting.

I love to cook and read a good book!

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**United Way Speaker’s Bureau Gearing Up**

Once again, we at AURORA are gearing up to participate in the United Way of CNY’s Speaker’s Bureau for the upcoming community campaign. Year after year, speakers from AURORA are requested by area businesses and company campaign planners for their motivational talks and the example of how United Way dollars have REAL impact on people's lives.

If you or a loved one have benefited from AURORA services and you would like to help us get the word out about how we can help others, consider joining our Speaker’s Bureau. Training is available and the length of talks is usually just five minutes! But those five minutes often have a huge impact and we would be so grateful. If you'd like to know more, contact David DeFrancis at 315-422-7263 ext. 229.

Also, if United Way is coming to your workplace, remember to thank your leadership for supporting and investing in our community!

STRIVE: Stepping Toward Real Life Independence and Excellence

The fifth year is in the books for AURORA’s partnership program with LeMoyne College known as STRIVE (Stepping Toward Real Life Independence and Excellence) a college preparatory program for high school youth with vision loss from across the state. The four week program provided a plethora of experiences from college level coursework to fencing to cooking classes and a host of social activities to round out the month. The final highlight was the graduation ceremony, attended by parents, friends and relatives of the students.

Keynote speaker was Fulton native, Timothy Connors, who attended the first STRIVE program in 2013. He has since gone on to a successful tenure at Ithaca College, receiving various awards AND climbing to the top of Mt. Kilimanjaro!

Mr. Connors was full of inspiration and urged students to be strong self-advocates, push themselves beyond their comfort zones and always be willing to make friends and form a strong support network. Good advice for all of us as we say goodbye and send best wishes to the 15 students who completed the program this year.

Keynote speaker Timothy Connors
SPOTLIGHT ON EMPLOYMENT

AURORA is a National Industries for the Blind and Source America associated agency and we share in their mission to ‘enhance the opportunities for economic and personal independence of persons who are blind, primarily through creating, sustaining and improving employment.’

Our employment site is a customer service oriented business that manages the Veteran’s Administration Medical Center switchboard. We employ a staff of fifteen, including operators, a supervisor and lead worker who field calls from the entire region (including Utica), 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This “triple partnership” that is also supported by the New York State Commission for the Blind has been in existence for 20 years!

Save the Date

What: Emergency Personal Preparedness Seminar
(Free)
Where: AURORA of CNY, 518 James St., Ste. 100; Syracuse, NY 13203
When: Wednesday, November 8th at 11:00 a.m.

Are you prepared in the event of a disaster?
Do you know what to put in a home survival kit?
Have you established an evacuation plan?

Remember that YOU are the first responder to any disaster and being educated on how to best protect yourself and your loved ones is essential. Staff Sergeant Duane Morgan of the Citizen Preparedness Corps. will provide a comprehensive and informative seminar, with particular attention to the needs of people with vision or hearing loss. Materials will be fully accessible and an American Sign Language Interpreter will be available.

Please contact AURORA at 315-422-7263 or email: auroracny@auroraofcny.org to reserve a spot, as space is limited.
SPOTLIGHT ON ADVOCACY

Beginning September 19th until November 3rd, the Ballot Marking Device used for voting in the general election will be available at AURORA. People are invited to come and get familiar with the voting machine before they go to the polls on Election Day, November 7th. Appointments can be scheduled for weekdays between 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. by calling Marie or Starr at 315-422-7263.

Also, mark your calendars for a Candidate’s Forum: October 11th from 1:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m at Rosamond Gifford Room, 518 James Street, Syracuse.

Candidates for County Legislature, City Council and the Mayor of Syracuse are invited to attend to attend. Questions will be asked that affect the disability community.

The Candidates Forum is sponsored by AURORA, ARISE, Access CNY and Disabled in Action of Greater Syracuse.

SPOTLIGHT ON TECHNOLOGY

SEEING AI: “Your phone becomes your eyes!”

A new app from Microsoft for iOS customers turns the visual world into an audible experience for people with low or no vision using the latest in “intelligent” technology to narrate the world. The app is free, downloadable at the iOS store and has the following functions that describe what is in front of the iPhone camera:

**Short Text:** Speaks text as soon as it appears in front of the camera… for mail, labels letters, etc.

**Documents:** This function can provide audio for a printed page and recognize the text in the original formatting.

**Product Scanner:** Audio beeps to help locate barcodes and then scans them to identify products.

**Person:** Recognizes friends and describes people around you, including their emotions and estimated age by snapping a picture.

**Scene:** The camera feature describes the scene around you when you take a picture. This feature is in the experimental stage and will be improved upon in later versions.

According to AccessWorld Magazine, “One extremely useful feature found in Seeing AI is its appearance on the Sharesheet. Tap any image on your camera roll, an image attached to an email or text, or even one of those annoying images that appear on Twitter and other social media sites with no description tag. The “Recognize with Seeing AI” Sharesheet option will send the image directly to the app immediately, and recognize both any text it finds, and offer an image description. For more in depth analysis of the app from the American Foundation for the Blind website, visit: http://bit.ly/AFBarticle
“Your giving....supports a lifetime of living!”

Seventy nine years ago, in 1938, Norma Smith was born prematurely and as a result experienced a condition that wasn’t even first diagnosed publicly until 1942: that is Retinopathy of Prematurity or ROP. There are five stages to ROP ranging from mild to severe, and according to Norma, she could see, but not very well. Still, the condition didn’t stop her! She went to the Batavia School for the Blind, worked at Consolidated Industries and raised her daughter, Lesa. In 2005, she had eye surgery and saw a low vision specialist but had to wait a long time for her equipment. When it came time for her to move in 2008, the New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB) suggested that Norma call AURORA for help.

At that time, Norma received orientation and mobility, and rehabilitation teaching to orient her to her new apartment. She cooks, cleans, shops and does her laundry using the many devices she received from AURORA, including a new pair of glasses she received just recently to help her read with the small bit of vision she still has left.

“Aurora has done wonders for me, providing different equipment” Norma says and she is a wonder herself! At 79 years young she attends exercise class twice a week, volunteers at a library, knits beautiful scarves and has been bowling with the Blind Bowlers League since 1959!

Norma is also an active member of the Fay Road Baptist Church and the local chapter of the National Federation for the Blind.

Norma’s full life has been enriched because of AURORA’s donors and benefactors. Over the years, we’ve been able to help because of contributions that enable us to spend good, quality time with the people we serve over their lifetime.

Please consider a donation that will ensure that we will be here the next time Norma or someone else with a vision or hearing loss might need our help.

Updates to Mailing List?

We need your help to keep our mailing list up to date. Please let us know if you have any changes to your contact information or would like to be removed from the mailing list. We also welcome new names, so if you know of anyone who would like to receive our newsletter please call 315-422-7263 or e-mail us at auroracny@auroraofcny.org.
Join Our Mission — Without the generous support of our donors, we would not have been able to serve this community for more than 100 years. Donors like you provide much needed funds for programs such as our support groups, social work services, and skills training. We appreciate donations in any amount and thank you for your assistance.

Please complete & mail this form to:
AURORA of CNY, 518 James St., Ste. 100, Syracuse, NY 13203-2282

AURORA of Central New York 2017 Donation Form

Name ________________________________________________________
Address ______________________________________________________
City ______________________________ State ________ Zip __________
Phone ____________________________ Email __________________________________

I would like to make a contribution to AURORA of Central New York at the following level:

☐ $25  ☐ $50  ☐ $100  ☐ $250  ☐ $500*  ☐ Other $__________

☐ Please send me information about AURORA’S Planned Giving Program

I am paying by:  ☐ Check (Please make checks payable to AURORA of CNY, Inc.)

☐ MasterCard  ☐ Visa  ☐ American Express

My Account # ____________________________ Expiration Date: _______/_______

V-Code (three-digit number on back of card) ____________

Name on Account (if different from above) __________________________________________

Billing Address (if different from above) ___________________________________________

I am aware and allow AURORA of Central New York to charge my card for the above purposes.

Signature: ____________________________ Date: ________________________

* Gifts may be acknowledged in our newsletter; if you wish to remain anonymous please check here ☐.

In return for your gift you received no material goods or tangible services for supporting AURORA of Central New York. Your donation to AURORA is tax-deductible.
Women of AURORA: Reach Out Event to be Held at the Historic Century Club

Bonnie Scolaro, Priscilla Soden, and Nancy Marsden of the Women of AURORA will host a fun and informative gathering of women for a light dinner and inspirational presentations by Susan Gray and Gloria Applebaum, two women who have received AURORA’s services. The event will be held on Thursday, October 19th at 5:30 p.m. at the elegant Century Club at 480 James Street in Syracuse. This event is borne out of the belief that a woman-to-woman approach to learning about and supporting some of the emerging programs and services to assist people with vision and hearing loss, is an effective way to meet needs and make a difference in the community.

This is the fifth year of the event to raise funds to help children who are deaf/hard of hearing receive high-cost hearing aids that they could not have been able to afford otherwise. Women of AURORA has also assisted youth who are blind/visually impaired to learn about and obtain adaptive technology so they can succeed in school and beyond.

To learn more about Women of AURORA, please contact Debra Chaiken at 315-422-7262 ext. 225.

Presenters at Women of AURORA 2016: Kelley Cooper, Maggie Russell (Sign Language Interpreter), and Monica Johnson