



## Liberty Hall Creates Opportunities

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Within weeks after Robin, a Navy Veteran, arrived at Liberty Hall, his help made a big difference in continuing the operations of the gym at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Batavia, NY.



Robin, a Liberty Hall resident

Since Liberty Hall's opening in 2011, Cazenovia Recovery Systems, Inc. has helped hundreds of homeless Veterans who are in recovery from substance use. The program supports the Veterans' mental health and physical well-being, integrates VA services, and links to medical care, counseling, and other opportunities.

Partnering with the Batavia VA, Cazenovia Recovery initiated the first position for the facility's Incentive Therapy (IT) Program after the gym had been closed for months in 2015. IT offers participants paid work for completing on-campus tasks. Ever since, Liberty Hall Veterans have helped to keep the gym open.

Robin works mornings as a monitor at the gym Monday through Friday. He is proud to help the VA, which had closed the gym because it did not have enough employees to staff it. He is happy that fellow Vets who live on campus as well as others from the community who receive VA services come in to use the workout equipment and socialize.

"I open up each day and make sure that people sign in and out," he said. "I'm also in charge of the alarm system." He stepped up, he said, because, "I've been sober since August and I figured I was ready. Working keeps me focused."



Angela Angora, Liberty Hall's site supervisor

Angela Angora, site supervisor, agrees. "The IT program makes a huge difference," she said. "It gives our residents structure and purpose. It puts them in leadership roles. Here they are responsible for the gym." Working with the VA vocational specialist

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### Staffing Info

#### Let's Congratulate:

Sandy SanFillippo for becoming the full-time program secretary at Unity House!

Mark Welch for becoming the full-time residence monitor at Sundram Manor!

Ashley Jachimiak for passing her CASAC exam!

#### Let's Welcome:

Anna Lukaszewicz, clinical aide at Turning Point House

Betty Quiros, counselor associate at Liberty Hall

Jillian Warner, clinical services manager at Admin.

#### Cazenovia Creators & Catchers:

The entire Madonna House staff

Carolyn Kirkwood, Lisa Johnston, Latoya Reid, and Pamela Harper

Roxanne Powers

Ed Cichon

Fatisha Collins

Joshua Kellick

Remember to nominate your fellow coworkers before next month's gift card drawing.

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to get the IT position started, she noted another benefit is that the new work experience can be added to resumes when residents leave the program and prepare to move forward.

For Robin, that goal is moving back to Warsaw, NY, where he has a large extended and “really supportive” family.

Robin and fellow Liberty Hall residents hope that the VA will continue to support IT’s paid opportunities to learn work skills. This collaborative endeavor is proving its value to individuals and to the VA Center.



The Batavia VA Gym

## OASAS & SAMHSA Visits

Representatives from the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) visited three of our programs this month. The representatives sought input on trends in the field of substance use recovery services. While visiting Cazenovia Manor in South Buffalo, Liberty Hall in Batavia, and Madonna House in Lockport, the team heard from our staff members and leaders on themes in the field and potential solutions to concerns.



Ashley Jachimciak (left) and Kathryn Kaiser (right) welcome SAMHSA and OASAS reps (center).

## Mental Health Fair

Earlier this month, Restoration Society, Inc., in partnership with Lake Shore Behavioral Health, the Mental Health Association of Erie County, and Peer Connection, hosted a Mental Health Awareness Informational Fair. Dozens of fellow local providers were available at the Buffalo Central Library to provide information on their services to event attendees. The fair also included the fifth annual Mental Health Awareness Flash Mob that sought to overcome stigma related to mental health.



Carolyn Kirkwood, Lisa Johnston, and Latoya Reid at the Mental Health Fair

## Casa Di Vita Promotes Choice

The staff at Casa Di Vita, our community residence in Buffalo for women in recovery, are working hard to continue their successes related to Trauma-Informed Care. Over the last couple of months, the staff have focused on bringing new choices to the program. “We focus on choice in many of the everyday things that we do,” said Lisa Johnson, the program’s site supervisor. Residents choose which days they cook and often help to cook healthy meals. They also choose which chores they complete and which groups they attend. Staff also seek input from residents on group topics to better meet residents’ needs.

