



Meaningful lives for
people with disabilities

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/21PlusInc

21 PLUS TIMES
SUMMER 2020

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+ NEW BEGINNINGS

At 21 Plus, Inc., we are embracing each new day, and, thanks to our inspiring residents, staying optimistic and smiling through it all. Although many of our daily programming has been suspended, our group homes and incredible staff continue to serve and provide care to our residents 24/7.



MESSAGE FROM 21 PLUS

Dear Family and Friends,

2020 is a year that will go down in history as a series of unrelenting, unprecedented turn of events. COVID-19 has changed our way of life in the present and foreseeable future. We have suffered great losses, but we also have gained insight into our personal strengths and depth of character. The 21 Plus, Inc. Board, staff, families and individuals we serve have pulled together with fierce determination to overcome the emotional, physical and mental toll that COVID-19 has taken on all of us. Our community rose to the occasion with donations of sanitizer, leads on resources and suppliers of PPE and grants for Zoom video meeting platforms.

21 Plus, Inc. was awarded an Acts of Kindness Recognition grant by OceanFirst Foundation, Grunin Foundation and Townsquare Media. Our Board members and families adopted each group home, sending and continuing to send treats, activities and pick-me-ups as a token of appreciation.

Our staff is essential workers. They continue to come to work each day despite an increased risk of exposure because they know what is at stake for the individuals we serve. They ensure that our individuals have a safe and caring environment during these uncertain times. When we have had incidents of people testing positive for COVID-19, our staff volunteers went to those homes and worked to support our clients. They are heroes.

Congressman Andy Kim will be addressing and thanking our Direct Support Professionals for their heroic work on July 14, 2020 via virtual meeting platform.

As we are bombarded with images of violence and racial injustice on television and social media, we cannot stay silent. 21 Plus, Inc. denounces racism, racial injustice and all forms of violence, discrimination and bigotry against people of color. We stand in solidarity with persons of color, our employees, persons served, colleagues and communities. The racial injustices, hate-crimes and deaths that continue to take the lives of black Americans must end. We also applaud the Supreme Court of

the United States ruling that protects LGBTQ employees from being disciplined, fired or turned down for a job based on their sexual orientation.

21 Plus has a long history of serving people with developmental disabilities, disenfranchised people, for over 40 years. As the Executive Director of the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities, Mercedes Witowsky, articulately noted (excerpt), "This civil rights crisis belongs to all of us. The disability rights movement parallels the civil rights movement in many ways. Advocate and South African cleric Desmond Tutu reminded us that 'we are set in a delicate network of interdependence with our fellow human beings ... my humanity is caught up and is inextricably bound up in yours.'"

"Through our words and actions, we are ready to keep moving forward together."

– Diane Hutton-Rose, Executive Director, 21 Plus, Inc.

We reaffirm our commitment to justice and fairness for people of color, LGBTQ+, all people who have been marginalized and/or victims of injustice, as well as our mission to enable people with disabilities to live fulfilling lives in partnership with families and communities. We can only do this through diversity, inclusion and equality.

We pledge to keep listening and, obviously, much hard work still lies ahead. Through our words and actions, we are ready to keep moving forward together.

Sincerely,

Diane Hutton-Rose
Executive Director
21 Plus, Inc.



+ WHO ARE WE?

21 Plus, Inc. is a non-profit organization that provides community-based programs for individuals over the age of 21 with developmental disabilities. Our mission is to enable individuals with disabilities to lead fulfilling lives working in partnership with families and communities.

+ WHY ARE WE HERE?

In 1979, a small group of families had a need. Their sons and daughters (who had developmental disabilities) were graduating from high school at age 21 and did not have a program, training or a job to look forward to. How would they spend their days? How would they socialize with friends? What did they have to look forward to? These families came together to form 21 Plus, Inc. Today, our services have grown to include residential services, adult training centers and employment support throughout Ocean and Camden Counties. Over the past 40 years, we have expanded into 12 group homes, four apartments, an employment program and two Adult Training Centers.

+ WHAT PROGRAMS DO WE OFFER?

Residential
Apartments
Group homes

Vocational
Adult training centers
Supported employment

New look, same great cause.

Meet the new, fresh look of 21 Plus!

Tell us what you think by sending an email to info@21plus.org.



+ SALUTING OUR HEROES

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Thank you, Direct Support Professionals!
You are our true heroes!

Watch the video montage on our YouTube channel!

“Life should not only be lived, it should be celebrated.”

- Osho



+ 21 PLUS FOUNDATION UPDATE

The Foundation is pleased to welcome Dr. Laurie Roemmele in her new role as the Executive Director of the 21 Plus Foundation! Laurie started in her part-time position on May 4th. Laurie has worked with small to medium-sized not-for-profit agencies over the past 25 years in various capacities, including being a consultant for her own company. Her experience includes working with people who have intellectual and development disabilities, as well as working with DDD, Division of Vocational Rehab, Department of Education and many others. Her expertise includes training, fundraising, grant writing, strategic planning and more. She has worked in many counties in NJ and brings many resources to the table from her extensive experience.

The Foundation wishes outgoing Executive Director, Sheila Melore, the best on her well-earned retirement! After 28 years, Sheila retired as Executive Director of 21 Plus, Inc. and changed her focus, continuing her role as Executive Director of the 21 Plus Foundation on a part-time basis. By the end of 2019, thanks to Sheila's vision and determination, the Foundation achieved their original goal of reaching \$2 million in assets.

We are excited for the next chapter and the opportunity to continue generating financial support to enhance the mission of 21 Plus, Inc.



Our mission is to enable individuals with disabilities to lead fulfilling lives.

+ LET'S TALK PPE

We have gloves, face shields and HN95 masks. We picked up and distributed 2,000 surgical masks on April 28 and another 5,000 were delivered on May 11. We have 19 rain suits for use at sites with individuals who are COVID-19 positive, as well as 200 ponchos that arrived on May 4. Another 300 isolation gowns were delivered on May 11. We are deeply grateful to those who have reached out and donated personal protective equipment.

If you or someone you know would like to donate any PPE items, please email rsantoriello@21plus.org. Thank you!

+ COMFORT DURING COVID-19

Our staff is holding strong and we will continue to offer support and comfort to our team members who need it the most. Thank you for your continued support!



NEWS FROM THE BOARD

At the annual meeting held on April 21st, Russ Corby, Ed Frankman, Christine Matus, Elizabeth Ritacco and Michael York were reelected into the Board of Directors for a three-year term.

On May 26th, the 21 Plus, Inc. Board of Directors met for their annual reorganization meeting. The following board members were elected to the Executive Committee for the upcoming year:

Carol Jones – President

Richard Askoff – President-Elect

Frank Orawiec – Treasurer

Warren Heiss – Secretary

Lisa Peck was also elected into the Board of Directors for a three-year term. We appreciate the support and leadership of our board members. Thank you to everyone who volunteers their time to serve on the 21 Plus Board of Directors.

“We are deeply grateful to those who have reached out and donated personal protective equipment.”



21 Plus needs your help.

We hope that you will consider joining us on this journey to ensure that we can continue to help those in need. If you would like to donate, join our team or learn more about our organization, please visit 21Plus.org.

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