



Meaningful lives for
people with disabilities

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 /21PlusInc

21 PLUS TIMES
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**“I am happy I get to see you! I missed you
and can't wait for everyone to come back.”**

-Joyce Ligus



MESSAGE FROM 21 PLUS

Dear Family and Friends,

Autumn is upon us. The air is a bit crisper and the leaves are a brilliant array of color. No matter how stressful these times are, you cannot help but notice nature's beauty. The same is true at 21 Plus, Inc. You cannot help but notice the beauty of the human spirit.

It is an understatement to say things have changed – both at work and in our personal lives. Innovation abounds! Who could have imagined that we would be doing so many things virtually? Trainings, staff meetings, Adult Training Center services, and family visits. Even Grandma is on Zoom!

With all of the ways that we have become more isolated, the pandemic has brought us closer together. We have had to pull together to face the biggest challenge of our organization and industry's history. Never has the noble and essential work that our employees do each day become more apparent. We have advocated the value of the work of our Direct Support Professionals to legislators and the public for decades. Now it is seen firsthand.

When the individuals we serve needed the support of our Direct Support Professionals, they were there. Our DSP's did this despite their fear – fear of the unknown, fear of infection for them or their family, and fear of the national shortages of personal protective equipment. Our DSP's showed up day after day. They provided emotional support for people that might not understand why everything came to a screeching halt when day programs shut down, community outings were not safe, and they were suddenly unable to visit with family.

Through the herculean efforts of the administrative staff, the infrastructure of 21 Plus remained intact – keeping the machine running, so essential Direct Support Professionals would have the resources necessary to do their best work.

Now, slowly and with the right protocols in place, safely going back into the community, visiting with family, and both virtual and small numbers of in-person services at our adult training centers have resumed. It has been restorative; and gives us hope for the slow return to normalcy.

Our Board of Directors is engaged and committed to supporting 21 Plus through these tumultuous times. Our Board is working hard, consulting, and making decisions whenever called upon.

We are grateful to 21 Plus Foundation. Throughout the years, they have been there for us when we needed them. The Foundation sponsors employee recognition events like our Employee Recognition Fund and the Employee Appreciation Luncheon. This year, our partnership with the Foundation was instrumental for COVID-19 response. They collaborated with us, matching dollar for dollar the \$1/hour crisis stipend for DSP's during the critical early months of the pandemic. When we received approval from the State of New Jersey to have outdoor family visits at our group homes, 21 Plus Foundation granted the money to replace and update patio furniture, so that our individuals had comfortable and pleasant spaces to visit with their loved ones.

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biggest challenge of our organization
and industry's history.”**

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

Our mission, to enable individuals with intellectual developmental disabilities lead fulfilling lives in partnership with families and community, is a daily practice and demonstration of our collective commitment and dedication. It has been a year. We have seen the best of human nature. 21 Plus is a group of tried and true, loyal, and selfless people that put individuals first always – each making a difference, a true difference, in the lives of the people we provide services to and their families.

We are one agency, one mission.

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

Exciting things on the horizon

The new 21 Plus website is coming soon!

Our new website will help us further our mission of providing community-based programs in Ocean and Camden Counties for individuals over the age of 21 with intellectual and developmental disabilities. **Stay tuned!**



+ EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION DAY WAS A SUCCESS!

On Thursday, September 24th, 21 Plus held a virtual Employee Appreciation Day. 21 Plus logo swag bags were sent to staff prior to the event that included 21 Plus t-shirts, Wawa gift cards, programs, and other 21 Plus logo gifts. Speakers included board and family members, as well as pre-recorded messages from Tammy Murphy and Cory Booker. Individuals who receive services thanked their staff, and letters from families were read.

All Star Awards were given out to six staff members who were nominated by their peers. This year the awards went to:

Kristen Gilliam – Program Administrator
Brian Hankins – Support Staff
Danielle Smith – DSP

Anthony Bastos – DSP
Susan Johannessen – DSP
Eric Lentz – DSP

Above and Beyond awards were given to staff who have worked many hours of overtime during the pandemic. Service Awards were given to staff who reached milestones at 21 Plus:

5 Years – Ada Long-Gonzalez & Stephanie Gomez

10 Years – Solimar Rodriguez & Leah Bennett
15 Years – Dale Skiba

The event culminated with raffling door prizes that are generously donated by local businesses. This year, 21 Plus was fortunate to have 31 baskets to raffle to staff!



+ EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Da'von Perez | Group Home Assistant - 21 Plus, Inc.

When 21 Plus was deeply impacted early on during the pandemic, with both staff and individuals suffering the worst of the COVID-19 effects, Da'von stepped up to help in the biggest way possible.

Our first home was left with just one staff member to provide 24-hour care for three ladies who had also tested positive. Da'von made the sacrifice to work at the home, exposing himself when he hadn't already been, and quarantining away from his family and home. With only one other staff member, they worked three-and-a-half days at a time. When he wasn't at the site, he took shelter at one of our day programs ensuring he did not risk exposing his family.

Once the quarantine was over at that home, Da'von's selflessness did not end. Simultaneously, our second home tested positive. Again, he answered the call to help out a home that suffered a considerable loss of staff, spending several full days at the home and continuing his time away from his own home. This home was in quarantine for nearly a month before it was cleared.

Just as that home was cleared, another home tested positive. Da'von continued his quarantine for another month. By the end of our active COVID-19 cases, Da'von had spent over two months away from his own home. Da'von's actions through this time demonstrated an unmatched level of kindness, empathy, and humanity as he provided our individuals the highest level of care, regardless of the risk to himself. He is truly our hero!



NEWS FROM THE BOARD

In May 2020, Kearny Bank Vice President Lisa Peck joined the 21 Plus, Inc. Board of Directors. Lisa is a member of the Greater Toms River Chamber of Commerce and believes that serving adults with disabilities is an underserved segment of our society. Welcome, Lisa!

In August 2020, Community Medical Center Foundation Vice President Jennifer Shufan joined the 21 Plus Foundation, Inc. Board of Trustees. Jen's calling is to identify and provide opportunities that resonate with supporters - opportunities that draw on their skills and talents to create mutually beneficial relationships between them and the medical center. Welcome, Jen!

+ THE RETURN BACK

The best part of returning to Route 70 ATC for our individuals has been how excited and happy they are to see some of their friends and staff again.

Over the last few weeks, we have had the opportunity to visit local parks, get exercise, and enjoy these beautiful autumn days. While at the center, individuals have been working on their computer and puzzle skills and making decorations to make the ATC spooktacularly festive for Halloween.



“The Zoom program has been a blessing for Tricia, her dad and I. I am amazed by the interaction of all the residents.”

- Terry Grimes



+ 21 PLUS IS PROUD TO NAME MCGUIRE PARTNERS AS OUR 2020 COMMUNITY PARTNER AWARD WINNER!

McGuire Partners has been amazing to 21 Plus. Their superior craftsmanship is matched only by the kindness they show to the individuals we serve.

For example, when McGuire was doing a bathroom remodel at our Mizzen Avenue group home, one of the gentlemen who lives there was very interested in what they were doing. The McGuire Partners staff took the time each day to show him their progress, explain what they were doing, and what would happen next.

When McGuire came out to Dallas Drive group home to repair damage caused by a storm, they had to take down the decals in one of the men's room in order to paint the wall. They could have left it for staff to put back up, but instead they put the decals up working with our individual to make sure they were exactly where he wanted them and commented how much they enjoyed how happy it made him.

The staff at McGuire are considerate of the individuals at each house. They always consider whether or not noise bothers them, what time they should come to the house, and making sure that everything is cleaned up each day. They are very considerate of the staff as well. They always give us fair prices, often including extras at no charge because, as Jim has said, we are special to them. He works with us to make sure we get exactly what we want and stay within our budget. They are conscientious, kind, and generous. When thanked for going above and beyond and being so kind, they humbly said while they appreciate our kind words, it's just the right thing to do.



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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