



One-of-a-kind services  
for one-of-a-kind people.

#### Aspire's Mission:

Aspire's mission is to support children and adults with developmental and similar disabilities, helping them to live their lives to the fullest by providing individualized assistance based on personal choices.

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## Save the Date

DDAWNY Family  
Committee Meeting  
7 Community Drive  
Cheektowaga, NY  
Third Tuesday of the Month  
7:00 pm

For event information,  
please contact Michael Holley  
at 716-505-5512 or via email at  
[Michael.Holley@aspirewny.org](mailto:Michael.Holley@aspirewny.org)

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# Transition Times

Fall 2017

Aspire of WNY's Success Through Transition™

## Transition Learning Center Open for WOW Students



Dave, Nate, Steve, and Matt using laptops.

On Fridays, anyone passing by Suite 422 at the Tri-Main Center might hear the ringing sounds of laughter emanating from Aspire's Transition Learning Center (TLC). The TLC has been remodeled and set up for students who are participating in the World of Work (WOW) program as a place to hold weekly meetings to review all that was accomplished that week. The meetings are an opportunity for students from participating school districts to join together and learn from one another as they are presented with their weekly WOW curriculum. The

laughter is a natural byproduct from the spirit and camaraderie found when friendships are being forged, and students are sharing their experiences from the hard work they have put in.

The TLC is a classroom environment, complete with a Technology Center featuring eight laptop workstations with counter seating and a large conference table. In addition, through a grant awarded to Aspire by the Cummings Foundation, the TLC now has a Smart Board and iPads for the student interns. The iPads have carefully chosen applications that are particularly relevant to the needs and interests of the students.

Having this dedicated space is extremely important in supporting Aspire of WNY's commitment to providing quality transition services for local students with disabilities.

Vocational training programs like WOW are providing these students with employable skills and real-life work experiences through internships at local business partners. The space and technology available at TLC is allowing students to build upon those internship experiences and continue their growth and development as they prepare for their transition to adulthood.



The new TLC Classroom and Conference area.

## WORK SKILLS Summer Program Spotlight

Juliet Benz has been participating in the Aspire Work Skills Program for three years. This year, Juliet worked at the discount clothing store, Amvets. Her internship lasted six weeks during which time Juliet worked on a variety of tasks to develop employable skills. For Amvets, she helped keep the store looking organized and presentable for the customers, she sorted hangers, straightened up the racks of clothing and shoe displays, and learned to pull the color-coded tag system.

Throughout the summer, Juliet worked very hard and grew more confident and independent every day. When asked to describe her favorite things to do at Amvets, she talked about emptying the carts, working with her job coaches, and meeting and working with the nice employees at the store. Since first participating in the Work Skills Program, Juliet has made great strides in becoming an independent and efficient worker. The business partners where she has interned have all said that Juliet is a pleasure to work with and a great asset to their site.

Congratulations Juliet! Keep up the good work!



Juliet working the racks at Amvets.

## People First Care Coordination

In 2015 OPWDD initiated a comprehensive re-evaluation of the service system by establishing a Transformation Panel of stakeholders.

The vision communicated by the Transformation Panel is that people with developmental disabilities will be accepted as part of our communities and live the lives they choose while experiencing good health, growth, and personal relationships. The Panel recognized, and OPWDD concurs, that New York State's system of services for people with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities must change to promote better use of resources to meet growing and changing needs, become more person-centered, and demonstrate measurable outcomes.

In response to this change, OPWDD will be implementing People First Care Coordination. This will bring together existing OPWDD providers into Care Coordination Organizations (CCO), requiring the development of a single person-centered Life Plan. It will combine OPWDD services with health and wellness services, behavioral health, and medication management.

CCOs will be authorized as federal Health Homes (HH), bringing Medicaid Service Coordinators (MSC) together for cross-system care coordination, with a team approach. The CCO is designed to help people seamlessly navigate multiple systems.

These changes will have an impact on individuals who have been working as Medicaid Service Coordinators. Existing MSCs will be offered the opportunity to transition to CCO's. Existing MSCs that don't meet the education requirements for care coordinators will be grandparented.

People First Care Coordination is a major undertaking and establishes a pathway to Managed Care. The transition is underway, and the plan is for CCO/Health Homes to begin operation in the summer of 2018.

### Comments, Suggestions or Ideas?

*If you have any comments, suggestions or a subject you would like to see in an upcoming newsletter, please contact Paula Kerber at 716-505-5262, or email [paula.kerber@aspirewny.org](mailto:paula.kerber@aspirewny.org).*

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