

## 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**  
**7:00pm**

For event information, please contact Shana Caldarella at 716-505-5512 or via email at shana.caldarella@aspirewny.org

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## Aspire of WNY's Success Through Transition™

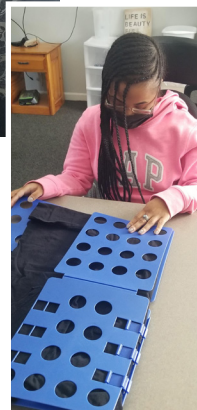
## BUILDING BRIDGES

Aspire of WNY's dedication to workforce training initiatives that not only support the career goals of those we serve but also our employees. In efforts to train the new workforce entering into employment with Aspire, we have developed a single source of employment and life skill training.

The Training Academy was developed in collaboration with the Community & Independent Living Supports Division and the Aspire Human Resources Division, Workforce Training department. The Academy simulates a typical home, whether it be certified or community based. Our workforce training department will onboard new employees at the Training Academy while providing a hands-on skill-based practicum. This environment mirrors what a day in life may be like while assisting the people they support in cooking, cleaning, medications, and other activities of daily living.



**ABOVE:**  
Jenna organizes donations at ADAPT Fashions.



**RIGHT:**  
Brandi uses the wonderfold device.

In October 2021, Adult Development and Professional Training (ADAPT) Interns began receiving community based prevocational instruction for one full day a week. They receive a combination of training in cooking, cleaning, and laundry alongside classroom instruction. This hands-on approach has started a new enterprise; a

boutique with a niche market called ADAPT Fashions. Interns in this experience have developed a donation-based clothing closet in our accessible facility to help others dress for success. The Interns are learning business skills such as marketing, operations, and customer service while using their love of art and fashion to strengthen their employability.

Lastly, the Training Academy is a place where one can imagine themselves living independently. This environment also enables

our Community Habilitation Service to provide group experience with hands-on training in a real living environment. The B.R.I.D.G.E.S. (Bridging Relationships, Integration, Dreams, Goals, Equal Opportunity for Success) Program is a structured ten-month learning opportunity focused on community learning connections. The small group hours can be established day or evening based on the availability needs of the group participants.

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## A Journey after High School

Liane Agro, Aspire's Coordinator of Day Services Opportunities, met Bill in the early Fall of 2021.

They had an informal meeting to find out if the Supported Volunteer & Lifestyle Enrichment (SVLE) program that she coordinates would be a good fit for him and his goals now that he had graduated from High School. Liane sat down with Bill and his family and found out very quickly that he was ready to begin some type of volunteering or work.

His brother and sister were attending school once again and he was missing the routine of being out of the house and learning. Just the short time from June until October was enough for Bill to be a little stir crazy.

Once Liane began to describe the different programs that Aspire had to offer, Bill began to get excited. The team at Aspire worked together to create a schedule of different services that would help Bill achieve his goals of socialization, independence, and eventually work.

Since starting, Bill has made great strides in learning to adjust to change and has made friends in all three programs. Some of his favorite things to do are: Meals on Wheels with the SVLE Program, playing games of Wii bowling with his friends at the Co-Op, and learning about professionalism and work with his peers in Pre-Voc. He is finding his transition to adult life full of great new experiences both in learning and fun!



ABOVE: One of Bill's favorite activities with SVLE is Meals on Wheels!

LEFT: Bill jumped right into this Photo Opp with Santa over the Holidays!



Aspire's Transition Department is currently accepting applications for all of their fall programs, including World of Work (WOW) and individualized or 1:1 internships in the community. If you are interested in learning more about these transition programs for your students or would like an application please contact Paula Kerber at 716-505-5262 or [PRKerber@aspirewny.org](mailto:PRKerber@aspirewny.org)

## Building Bridges

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The program offers structured learning opportunities in small group settings, maximum of one staff to four participants. All learning opportunities will have a connection to a community learning experience where learned skills can be applied. This program will bridge to additional services to continue on a path to Employment and Independent Living.

Overall, the Aspire Training Academy is a place of building skills and bridging the gap while we create opportunities for collaboration to support our community!

For more information, please contact Aspire of WNY's Central Intake at 716-838-0047 or by email at [Intake@aspirewny.org](mailto:Intake@aspirewny.org).



Community BRIDGES participants learn about compromising with others, the beginning steps to teamwork!

### 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).

### Want an electronic copy of Transition Times?

Send your email to: [paula.kerber@aspirewny.org](mailto:paula.kerber@aspirewny.org) and we'll send you an electronic version of Transition Times. Thanks for your interest!

Happy Spring