

Helping You Help Others



By: Noelle Lambert

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December's Charity of the Month is:



Options for Community Living, Inc. is a local not for profit organization whose mission is to assist individuals and families in need develop their fullest potential for independent living.

Options was formed in 1982 to respond to the need for supportive housing for people with serious mental illness. The Mental Health Residential Program grew rapidly, and in 1994 Options introduced case management services to Long Islanders living with HIV/AIDS. Soon after, a housing program for this population was started as well. More recently, Options has partnered with Long Island Health Homes to offer care coordination services to high need Medicaid users with chronic illnesses through the Access to Care Program. As of today, Options serves more than 1,800 adults and children annually through its programs and manages over 180 scattered housing sites across Nassau and Suffolk counties!

Options case managers marvel at the hurdles overcome by each program participant and celebrate every accomplishment and achievement. Here is the story of one brave and amazing individual currently receiving Home and Community Based Services (HCBS).

Leslie was referred by her Care Coordinator to receive Options Home and Community Based Services, HCBS. Her history included abuse by people in authority and makes her shy when meeting new people and unsure about anything new or unfamiliar. Leslie and her husband have been married for several years and as they've aged, they have developed some health issues. With minimal cooking skills, Leslie wanted to be able to prepare healthy meals for herself and

her husband. Thanks to one-on-one assistance through Options HCB services, Leslie improved her cooking skills and is now filling up her recipe book with tasty, diabetes-friendly meals she can prepare on her own.

Leslie's symptoms caused her such distress that she rarely left her apartment unless accompanied by her husband or mother. Even though her mother lives only a half a mile from her home, she has not walked there independently in 3-years. Leslie was determined to overcome her fear so that she could live a more fulfilled life....go to stores, visit family and take an art class. For months, Leslie worked to become more familiar with the walking route to her mom's. She gradually grew more comfortable and walked with an Options employee until she was ready to take the walk on her own.

Leslie completed her first solo trip to her mother's home and her family celebrated her accomplishment! They were so impressed by her courage that they became more involved in helping her achieve other goals. Now, with the support of her family, Leslie is applying for a gym membership and plans to work with her Options HCBS provider on becoming more fit and healthy. Leslie is less fearful of her community. She has learned that each small step brings her closer to the life she wants for herself and her family.

If you wish to inquire about receiving help, want to volunteer or donate to this organization, please contact their Development Director, Denise Waterhouse, at DWaterhouse@OptionsCL.org

Looking to donate this holiday season?

Ronald McDonald House of LI- www.RMHLongIsland.org

The Ronald McDonald House of Long Island in New Hyde Park continues to serve families of seriously ill children by participating in a Wish List Collection! You can help them stock their pantry with everyday essentials for their residents. Your generosity helps them fulfill their mission of keeping families close in the midst of a medical crisis. Below is a list of items that are needed (please be sure that all items donated are new and in their original packaging): Pantry Items such as cereal, oatmeal, and canned fruit; Cleaning Supplies such as glass cleaner, lysol wipes and bathroom cleaners; Linens such as bath mats and hand and face towels; and Kitchen Supplies such as dish and hand towels and dishwasher liquid. Please visit their website for a full list of needed supplies!

If you would like your organization to be featured in this column, e-mail

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