

*Headway is a support and advocacy agency for persons with brain injury, other disabilities and seniors.*

# *Starry Night with Headway!*

## Virtual Silent Auction



### A STARRY SUCCESS

Headway's 2021 Starry Night Spring Silent Virtual Auction launched on Wednesday, June 16 and closed on Wednesday, June 30. The event was held online at [headwayofwny.org](http://headwayofwny.org) and was a first for Headway.

2020 marked the first time in many years that Headway was unable to hold its largest annual fundraiser. When the pandemic first hit in early spring, Headway was already in the midst of planning Starry Night with Headway! This event was to have been held at Shea's Seneca on Thursday, May 14, 2020. Although the event was cancelled, many gifts had already come in and donors were willing to have their gifts and sponsorships held until such time that it became feasible to hold the event. Shea's Seneca graciously returned the required hold amount for the event, as well. Unfortunately, as time went on, we all learned that live events would be put on hold indefinitely.

Many ideas were considered over the ensuing months and ultimately a smaller, online version of the original event was planned. Many thanks to all involved for your patience,

ongoing interest and support. The event was condensed to a virtual silent auction and the end result was a successful one.

This new virtual event was open to anyone who wished to participate with no tickets or entrance fees necessary. Each participant received a bid ID number and instructions were provided on the web page created exclusively for this auction.

With 13 items to bid on, there were a total of 10 bidders, 26 bids and 11 winning bids. Thank you very much to all who participated and helped raise funds in support of Headway's mission!

Special thanks to the following for their support of this year's version of our spring gala!

**Sponsors:** Sarah Denio and Family; Erie and Niagara Insurance Agency; Edward and Barbara Reed; Mark and Nancy Reed

**Donors:** Rose Marie Cetola; Tom and Kathy Kilminster; Joseph McMahan; Jeff and Trudy Sanderson; James Truax

*cont'd on page 3*

#### IN THIS ISSUE:

- Cover: A Starry Success, Virtual Silent Action
- 2 From the Director
- 3 Staff Updates
- 4 People Inc. News

*Headway is a donor designated agency of the United Way  
501C3 Non-Profit Organization*

## FROM THE DIRECTOR



We are all hopeful that the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic is behind us, but as I write this, there are new, scary concerns regarding the Delta variant. Breakthrough infections are occurring, even for people who have received the vaccine, though scientific evidence reveals that, even when infected, those that are vaccinated have a much easier recovery and lower mortality rate than people who have not received full vaccinations.

Headway has continued to be an important resource for the community and we have managed, up to this point, to implement creative office coverage and use of telehealth connections in both our Waiver and support programs for groups and individuals. We would like to return to more in-person programming, but safety is our top priority and we continue to practice caution.

In this newsletter, we introduce a new addition to the Headway team – Mr. Christopher Malinowski, who is our new support and advocacy specialist, a position that was open since the height of the pandemic. We are excited that, with his contribution, we can increase our presence and help in the community.

The Waiver Programs continue to be available, but there are staffing and employment challenges affecting all the contracted agencies in most of New York State, in terms of health aids and service coordinators. We had projected that this would improve around October of this year, but the situation is fluid and depends a great deal on how the pandemic manifests and communities respond.

We are also being affected by employment changes in our Waiver Programs, which present an opportunity for skilled individuals to take advantage of the high number of job openings in the area. Currently, we have three positions available Headway that are posted on the Headway and People Inc. websites.

Even with existing challenges, I think we need to stay optimistic and realize that we are in a better position now than we were a year ago. At Headway, we are fully committed to take on whatever comes next, while staying safe.

*Ronald Fernández, RRDS, CRC, LMHC*  
Director

---

## STAFF UPDATES



### **Christopher “Chris” Malinowski, Support and Advocacy Specialist**

Chris received his Bachelor's degree in Psychology from SUNY Brockport. Chris comes to Headway of WNY after having spent a number of years working in case management roles, providing services for refugee resettlement, supported housing for individuals with severe-pervasive mental illness, and in care coordination for an older adults' program. He is currently pursuing his Master's of Social Work degree at the University at Buffalo. Chris one day hopes to use his education to help people in the field of mental-health counselling.

In his spare time, Chris enjoys reading, writing and meditating. He likes writing poetry and participating in community events in the Western New York area. Chris has a passion for helping others and utilizes his talents to cultivate connections within the community.



### **Shawniece Baillie, Lead RRDS**

Headway is happy to announce that Shawniece Baillie has accepted the position of lead RRDS on the NHTD Program. Shawniece has worked for Headway in both Waiver Programs as an assistant RRDS and an RRDS. The Lead RRDS is a leadership position which works specifically on one waiver initiative and supervises staff who work their majority of hours on that program. Prior to her Headway employment, Shawniece worked in direct service with our affiliate, People Inc., and managed a small business in Niagara Falls, NY. In addition, Shawniece is committed to health and fitness and teaches a variety of classes, including spin fusion and barre. She is married and the mother of fraternal twins.

The mission of **Headway of WNY, Inc.** is to ensure that individuals in WNY with brain injuries, other disabilities and seniors have access to advocacy, resources and support systems to enable them to live as independently as possible. We seek to educate the broader community about the causes, consequences and means of prevention of brain injury.

## A STARRY SUCCESS CONT'D

**Gifts-In-Kind:** Albright-Knox Art Gallery; Alethea's Chocolates; BAC for Women; Buffalo Bills; Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra; Headway Staff; Hunt Country Vineyards; Prime Wines Corp.; Salvatore's; Stress Relief, Annette Romeo; Tantalio Fine Portraits; Vision Development of WNY (Vidler's); Wegmans; Ristorante Lombardo

This website-based event offered supporters, friends and colleagues the opportunity to engage online for a shared purpose. We welcome your feedback and comments.

Please feel free to send your reactions and thoughts on the event to [support@headwayofwny.org](mailto:support@headwayofwny.org). Your input will help us as we continue to improve processes for possible future virtual activities and events. And of course, we hope to bring back our in-person annual spring gala in 2022 - we will keep you posted as developments arise!



## SUPPORT GROUPS UPDATE

Headway continues to offer virtual support groups on a bi-monthly basis. The virtual connection instructions can be found under the Support Groups tab on our website at [headwayofwny.org/support\\_groups](http://headwayofwny.org/support_groups).

We plan to continue these groups in a virtual format until there is an adequate comfort level with in-person activities at Headway. We are happy to have Christopher Malinowski as our new main facilitator of these meetings (see article within this newsletter).

**Please note: The Support Groups will meet every first and third Wednesday of the month beginning in September. This is a change from the previous Tuesday schedule.**

The first September meeting will be held on the first Wednesday of the month, starting September 1. The time has not changed and will remain 6:30 to 7:30 pm. We will follow the schedule of first and third Wednesday of the month virtually, until further notice.

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE**  
*MOVE FORWARD WITH HEADWAY*

**Become a Member of Headway of WNY  
and get involved! We need you to help sustain our mission.**

## PEOPLE INC. NEWS



### PEOPLE INC. SENIOR LIVING ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS MULTIPLE LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT WESTERN NEW YORK

Do you have a parent or elderly loved one who needs to downsize from their home or remove the worry of household maintenance? It's helpful to plan ahead and our trained team of staff from People Inc. Senior Living can help with financial eligibility questions, as well as provide guidance for families and older adults who are thinking of moving. People Inc. Senior Living provides affordable and maintenance-free apartments for independent older adults age 62 and up who are income-eligible.

Apartment applications are accepted year-round for our Senior Living locations throughout Western New York, including Amherst, Angola, Blasdell, Buffalo (border of Cheektowaga and South Buffalo, Gowanda\*, Grand Island, Lackawanna, Lockport (border of Amherst), Springville and Wheatfield (border of North Tonawanda). (\*Our Gowanda location provides HUD Section 202 Affordable Housing and NYS Tax Credit apartments for seniors age 62+. Accessible unit available. Amenities vary. TTD/TTY: 1.800.662.1220).

Two benefits of choosing People Inc. Senior Living are affordable rent based on income and safety features. As an added cost savings, some utilities are included. The apartments include a kitchen with appliances. Amenities ensure cleanliness and safety. Various safety features include stove fire prevention devices, grab bars in the bathroom, emergency pull-cords, a secure entrance and a 24-hour response system. There is also a day-time manager and a live-in caretaker for building emergencies. Tenants are welcome to have one small pet. If additional supports are needed, tenants may utilize a unique benefit through People Inc. Senior Living Service Coordination at no extra charge to assist with various services. **For more information or an application, email [Seniorliving@people-inc.org](mailto:Seniorliving@people-inc.org) or call 716.817.9090.**

