

Perspectives

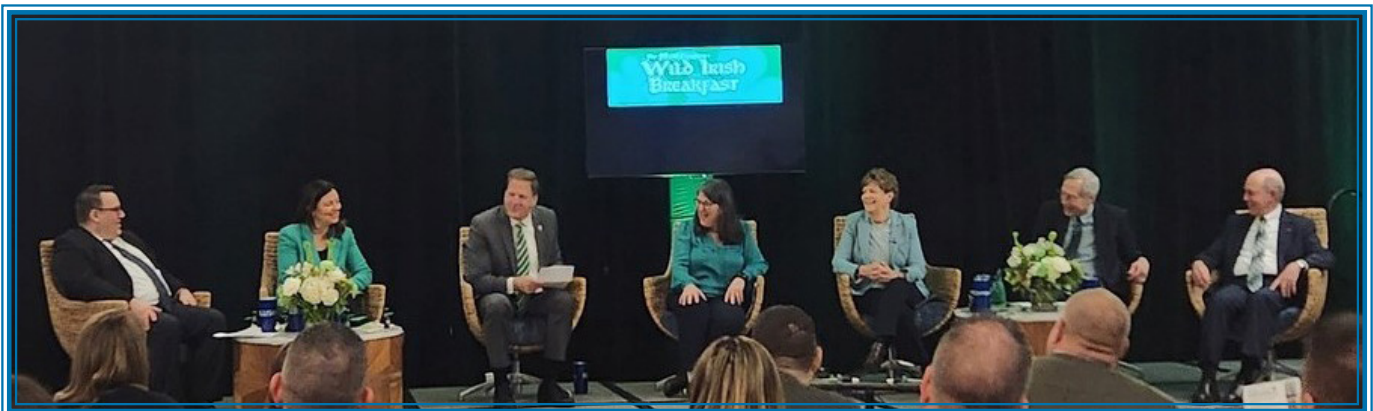
Spring 2023

“Empower Individuals, Maximize Independence”

32nd Annual Wild Irish Breakfast Brings Wit & Blarney

The PLUS Company’s 32nd Annual Wild Irish Breakfast took place on Friday, March 17. This year’s speakers included comedian Juston McKinney, Jordan Guagliumi from Nashua West Rotary, Alderman Ernie Jette from the Rotary Club of Nashua, Mayor Jim Donchess, Governor Chris Sununu, Senator Kelly Ayotte, Senator Jeanne Shaheen, and “Blarney Master” Mayor Donnalee Lozeau. The highlight of the event was a speech given by PLUS Company client, Rebecca Raza, who spoke about the supports and services provided by PLUS over the years, and how they have positively impacted her life. You can read more about Rebecca inside this newsletter. Proceeds from the Wild Irish Breakfast are used to support The PLUS Company’s Adult Education Program.

A very big “thank you” to this year’s sponsors, especially our “Pot of Gold” sponsor, The John Flatley Company; Gold Sponsors Richard Allard, Gate City Electric, and TD Bank; and Silver Shillelagh Sponsors Allen Mello, Critical Process Filtration, Gateways Community Services, Law Family Companies, and St. Joseph Hospital.



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Partnership with Rivier University a Major “PLUS” for Clients



The PLUS Company literacy program at Rivier University is back and better than ever after a 3-year hiatus. This program, which has been in place for over a decade, hires graduate students to teach basic literacy skills to PLUS Company clients during classes on campus. The goal is to help clients enhance communication skills and develop basic reading and writing skills, while Rivier University Graduate Students learn effective techniques for teaching and relating to students with disabilities. Clients also get the opportunity to experience positive interactions on a college campus. Everyone is very excited that this program is up and running after the long break caused by the pandemic.

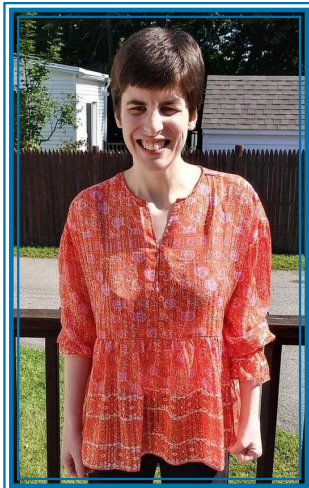
PLUS Clients have also had a lot of fun working with Rivier In-Service Learning Student, Olivia. For 8 weeks, Olivia visited PLUS, leading art and craft classes and having a great time. Projects included everything from mason jar crafts to painting, and helped clients work on communication skills, hand-eye-coordination and having positive interactions within a group environment. Thank you, Olivia, for all your hard work!

Rebecca’s Story

Rebecca Raza has been a client of The PLUS Company for 7 years, and has made sure to make the most of every minute. Rebecca started with PLUS in 2016, after completing her schooling. She attended the STRIDE internship program at Lowell General Hospital, a program developed in partnership with Sodexo and the hospital to teach PLUS Company clients transferable employment skills within a business environment. Upon graduation, Rebecca got a job at the Wingate Nursing home as a kitchen aid with the assistance of her PLUS staff. There, she worked on the line, setting up the soup stations, washing dishes, and managing the salad station. In 2020, Rebecca decided she was ready for the next step in her career, and took part in the PLUS Company Café internship program, a partnership formed with the Lowell Public School System, PLUS, and Aramark. After completing her internship, PLUS Company staff helped Rebecca begin her job search, eventually landing on the perfect opportunity: Bear Mountain Nursing Home. For the past two years, she has worked in the kitchen at Bear Mountain, preparing desserts, setting up the coffee carts, serving the residents, washing dishes, and prepping the meals.

Rebecca is very proud of herself and all that she has accomplished with PLUS. “The PLUS Company is a great place to go to get a job,” she says. “PLUS helped me learn how to speak up for myself and how to work independently.”

In her spare time, Rebecca likes to play video games, hang out with friends, play basketball, and bowling.



Spring Formal



Staff Spotlight: Kayla Lent Earns DSP-1 Certification

Congratulations Kayla!

Kayla Lent has been employed at The PLUS Company for a little over four years. She started as a Career Trainer, and has now transitioned into a job development role. Kayla’s job is to assist clients in their employment endeavors by developing, managing, and supporting them throughout job exploration, job search, applying, and interview process. She also assists with creating and maintaining strong relationships with area employers, assisting with individualized candidate screening, and creating group or individual work opportunities. Kayla says that she receives great satisfaction from her work, and enjoys watching the whole process unfold from beginning to end. “I love that I make a difference in the lives of clients by increasing their self-confidence, self-worth, and I get to see the happiness shine through their successes. My favorite part of working with The PLUS Company is that I work with a really dedicated and supporting team. There is a great understanding of the mission across the organization to empower adults with disabilities to maximize their independence. It’s really an amazing opportunity to work with these clients and team at The PLUS Company.”

Recently, Kayla completed her DSP-1 certification with the National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals. This achievement acknowledges direct support professionals for their exemplary work in supporting people with disabilities. The PLUS Company joined NADSP in 2022 to allow Direct Support Professionals to learn and apply practices and evidence-based skills in the workplace. Clients receiving supports from certified DSPs will have the advantage of partnering with highly trained professionals committed to supporting them using the ethical and effective interventions that they have mastered.



Kayla earned the NADSP DSP-I certification on
March 24, 2023.

PLUS Company Client Heads to Berlin for Special Olympics World Games



Chelsea, a PLUS Pride Athlete, will be participating in the Special Olympics World Games in Berlin, Germany this June. She is the only NH athlete attending. She has been participating in Special Olympics for over 21 years. She has participated in softball, basketball, bowling and athletics for PLUS Pride. A couple of years ago she decided to try something new. Chelsea was the first female powerlifter for NH and PLUS Pride. After only a year of powerlifting she went to the USA Games in Orlando, FL, winning three bronze medals. Within months of arriving home from the USA games

she was asked to participate in the World Games in Berlin. We will all be watching you from home on ESPN, Chelsea!

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Director's Letter

It's spring and PLUS Company clients are getting out and into the community! After a three-year hiatus, our Literacy program with Rivier University is back up and running. PLUS clients are so excited to be on the college campus, improving their reading and communication skills with the help of Rivier graduate students. It's a wonderful partnership that brings a lot of benefits to both organizations.

Our nature education program with the Beaver Brook Association is just beginning a new session. Clients are able to participate in guided walks along the nature trails and learn all about plants and animals. We will share more about those adventures in our summer newsletter. Clients are also getting outside for walks, working in community gardens, and exploring new interests through classes and clubs. It's a wonderfully busy time!

We've also been collecting a lot of gold, as all three of our PLUS Pride Basketball teams won the top prize at the Special Olympics of New Hampshire state games. We are very proud of all of the athletes, and would like to thank our coaches and volunteers for their hard work and dedication.

Speaking of Special Olympics, our very own Chelsea Schultz will be competing in the Special Olympics World Games in Berlin, Germany this June! She is the only New Hampshire athlete attending and the first female powerlifter for NH. We are so proud and cannot wait to watch her on ESPN.

None of this would be possible without our donors and sponsors. We recently held our 32nd Annual Wild Irish Breakfast, and it was a great success. We would like to thank PLUS Company Client, Rebecca Raza for sharing her story during the event. You can read all about this remarkable young lady in this newsletter. A special thanks to our Pot of Gold sponsor: The John Flatley Company, Gold Shamrock sponsors: Richard Allard, Gate City Electric, and TD Bank, and Silver Shillelagh Sponsors: Allen Mello, Critical Process Filtration, Gateways Community Services, Law Family Companies, and St. Joseph Hospital. All of the funds raised at this event go directly towards serving our clients and providing the classes and experiences that help them to become more independent.

I would like to close by reminding everyone that we are in great need of staff. The PLUS Company offers a rewarding job, amazing work/life balance, and the chance to change someone's life for the better. I ask all of you to pause for just a moment and think of anyone you know who might be interested. It is essential that we find more staff in order to provide a full complement of services to our clients.

Have a safe and wonderful spring!

Thank you for choosing to support The PLUS Company and our clients.

-Kim Shottes