



## Save the Date – Next DD Community Forum

Tuesday, December 5

3:00 PM to 4:30 PM

[Click Here to Register for the Forum](#)



Join BHDDH for the Fall DD Community Forum on Tuesday, December 5<sup>th</sup> from 3:00-4:30 PM to get the latest news from the BHDDH Division of Developmental Disabilities.

Everyone must register in advance. After you register, you will receive a confirmation email with your unique login details to join the forum.

When you register, you can enter your questions or comments about the RI DD System. Director Kevin Savage and the DD team will answer questions and share other information and updates at this quarterly online event.

The forum will be hosted by Advocates in Action and will be held on Zoom. You will also be able to call in. If you can't join us, the forum will be recorded to watch later. [Click Here to find recordings of past forums.](#)

An ASL interpreter will be present at this event. For other accommodation requests, please email [MichelleWhite@AdvocatesinAction.org](mailto:MichelleWhite@AdvocatesinAction.org). If you have any questions or need assistance registering, call Advocates in Action toll-free: 1-877-532-5543, or email [aina@AdvocatesinAction.org](mailto:aina@AdvocatesinAction.org).

## We Want Your Feedback

We are thinking about updating our newsletter and website, but we need your help! Please let us know what you like and dislike about our newsletter and website by completing these surveys: [Newsletter feedback survey](#) and [Website feedback survey](#).



**Best Buddies at Providence College  
Polar Express Event  
Providence College, Moore Hall  
Sunday, December 3 from 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM**

Join the Providence College Best Buddies at the Polar Express event on Sunday, December 3, 2023 at the Providence College campus, at Moore Hall, from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Wear your favorite holiday or non-holiday pajamas!

You can register to become a Buddy at the event. Buddies must be between the ages of 18-35. Interested people can also [apply to be a Buddy online](#).

For more information, contact Cami Young, President of Providence College Best Buddies, at (508) 654-5343 or (401) 865-1040 or at [cyoung10@friars.providence.edu](mailto:cyoung10@friars.providence.edu).



## **Virtual Open House for Advocates in Action Leadership Series**

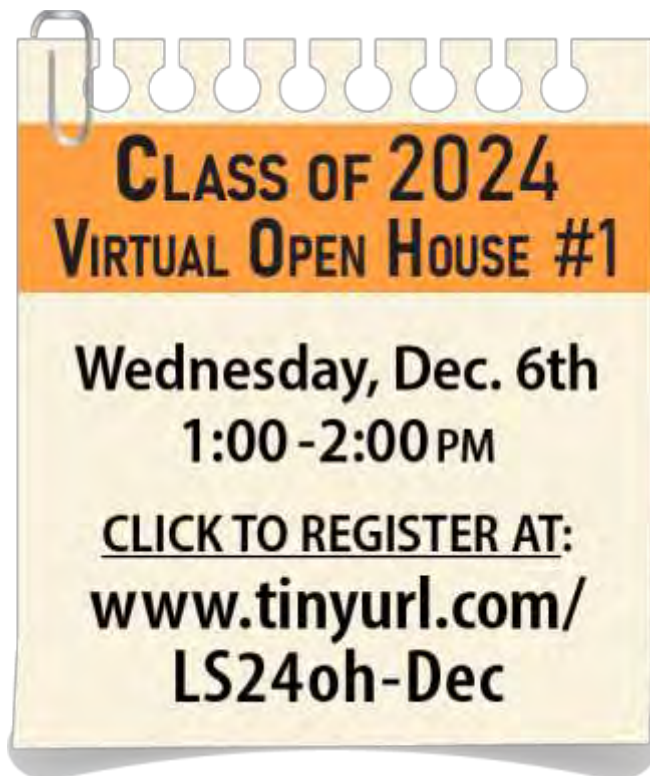
**Wednesday, December 6**

**1:00 PM – 2:00 PM on Zoom**

**[Click Here to Register](https://tinyurl.com/ls24oh-Dec)**

Advocates in Action is hosting a virtual open house on Wednesday, December 6th, at 1:00 pm on Zoom to share some information about the Leadership Series of 2024, how to fill out an application, and answer any questions that people may have. The link to register for the Open House is: <https://tinyurl.com/ls24oh-Dec>. A second open house will be held in January.

The Leadership Series is an in-depth learning experience that's user-friendly, interactive, informative, and fun! The Series was created to empower Rhode Islanders aged 18 and older who have an intellectual/developmental disability (I/DD) to speak up for themselves, navigate the DD System, connect with the community, and live life on their own terms, just like everyone else does!



Applicants don't need to read or write to participate in the Series. The Series presents information in a variety of formats, including pictures, video, music, games, art, and more, to make the content engaging, inclusive, and accessible.

While the Series is designed primarily for individuals who have an I/DD, family members, staff, and friends who will be supporting a class member are also welcome to apply.

See the flyer at the end of this newsletter for more information.

## **Job Opportunity! NCI Survey Interviewers**

### **[Click Here to Apply Online by Friday, December 8](#)**

The Sherlock Center, located at Rhode Island College, is seeking individuals to serve as survey interviewers for the [National Core Indicators \(NCI\)](#) Survey.

The purpose of the NCI survey is to gather data that will help measure and improve the quality of supports for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. For more information about the National Core Indicators, [visit the NCI website](#).



The survey is done once a year and will be conducted both remotely and in person. This is a temporary position between the months of January and June 2024.

Individuals with disabilities and family members are encouraged to apply. Training will be provided. Payment is based on the number of surveys completed. [View the full job description here](#) and use the link above to apply online.

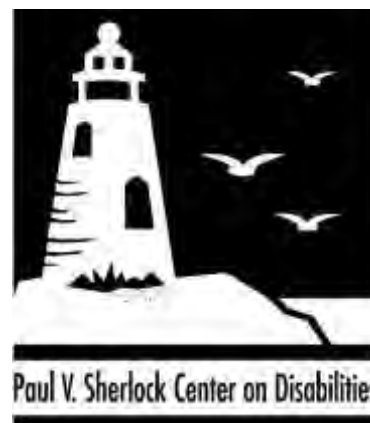
For questions about the position, please contact Family Support Specialist Delmarie Rivera at [drivera@ric.edu](mailto:drivera@ric.edu).

#### **Required Qualifications:**

- Reliable transportation.
- Familiarity with and/or willingness to use Zoom, computers, and mobile devices, including email and texting.
- Completed Rhode Island Background Check (BCI) upon hire.
- COVID-19 vaccination and most current booster.

#### **Preferred Qualifications:**

- Experience with people with disabilities.
- Strong communication skills, including the ability to gently guide an interview process.
- Experience collecting and entering data.



## **Webinar on Healthcare Transition: Options for Providing Decision-Making Support for Youth with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities (IDD)**

**Wednesday, December 6, 2023 at 4:00 PM**

[Click Here to Register](#)

This is the fourth session in a 4-part series for parents on supporting youth and young adults with IDD with decision-making. Featured speakers will include content experts from the Center on Youth Voice, Youth Choice as well as youth with IDD, who will share their expertise and/or lived experience in alternatives to guardianship and supported decision making.

The link to the series and first three sessions can be found by clicking this link: <https://youth-voice.org/parent-webinar-series-2023/>



## **International Day of Persons with Disabilities**



Sunday, December 3 is International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD). IDPD is an International Day of Celebration that has happened every year in December since 1992. The goal of IDPD is to raise awareness about disability issues and increase support for the wellbeing of people with disabilities.

You can help spread the word about IDPD and the importance of equal rights for people with disabilities. One way you can do this is by learning [what the United Nations is doing to celebrate IDPD this year](#). Another way you can spread the word is sharing stories about the achievements of people with disabilities on social media using the main hashtags #DisabilityDay and #IDPD.



## An Interview With Evan Huddon

*Article written by Randal Edgar (BHDDH) Public Information Officer*

There was a time when Evan Huddon's days were filled with one pursuit. He would get up, eat breakfast, and play video games. Usually it was Madden NFL — his favorite because it lets the user build a football team, choose the plays, and watch the plays unfold.

But even Evan will admit that long hours at his computer was not all fun and games.

He tossed his routine after a social worker/plan writer suggested that he might like to get out of the house and spend time with other people. That led to a tour of West Bay RI, a nonprofit that provides services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities. Evan, in his own words, "immediately fell in love with" what he saw.

Two and a half years later, he is a busy young man.



In an interview that coincided with the National Developmental Disabilities Employment Awareness Month, Evan described his weekly schedule. Some days, he's making coffee runs for employees in the Barry and Simpson buildings at BHDDH. Other days, he's taking in activities available through West Bay, or visiting his brother. On Fridays, he attends a writing group where participants exercise their brains with mad libs and then work together to write a story. Then there are the Friday and Sunday events at the Amica Mutual Pavilion (formerly the Dunkin' Donuts Center, or "Dunk"), in Providence, where Evan is employed as a ticket scanner.

Depending on the event, he might stay and watch. Those he's stayed for include Providence Bruins hockey games, Providence College basketball games, and a concert by a Colorado-based band called One Republic.

Such gatherings are in line with his interests, because in addition to being a sports fan, Evan is a music fan. The list of acts he's seen live includes Shania Twain, Elton John and Queen. He hopes to see Taylor Swift, but the closest he's come so far is seeing her recently released movie, "The Eras Tour."

If that's not enough, Evan also gigs as a DJ. He brings prepared playlists but is happy to take requests.

Despite his now busy life, Evan, 23, found time to travel to England this summer with his mother, father, and an aunt. They enjoyed just about everything about the 10-day trip, except that their luggage was lost and did not turn up until they were back home. Following a quick shopping spree for new clothes, the trip included a tour of William Shakespeare's home, visits to English and Scottish castles and a trip to Buckingham Palace. Evan says he was impressed by the scenery and the British accents, and especially the hotels, which take the concept of accessibility to a new level.

"I can just waive my key card and go into my room," he said.

The trip was Evan's first beyond the East Coast of the United States, but it probably won't be the last. For 2024, there is talk of a family cruise to Alaska.

Meanwhile, Evan's got plenty to keep him busy.

Asked what he enjoys most, he mentions the coffee runs and scanning tickets at the Amica Mutual Pavilion. He said he used to scan tickets at McCoy Stadium, but when it closed, he thought that was it. Then a friend from McCoy messaged him on Facebook.

"She said, 'Hey, I work over there at the Dunk, do you want to come work with us?'"

Now, he said, "I feel like I never left my McCoy family."



## Report Suspected Abuse

### Mandated Reporting

Reporting suspected occurrences of abuse, neglect, and mistreatment of individuals with developmental disabilities

To report abuse and serious incidents call the QA hotline at **(401) 462-2629**

The Quality Assurance (QA) Unit at BHDDH operates a 24-hour hotline, seven days per week, 365 days per year. Staff respond to reported incidents of abuse, neglect, mistreatment, and financial exploitation.

## For More Information on DD Initiatives

Consent Decree: see <https://bhddh.ri.gov/developmental-disabilities/consent-decree>

Conflict Free Case Management: see the [EOHHS CFCM website](#) or [DD Initiatives-CFCM](#)

RI DSP State Workforce Initiative: see <https://riswi.org/> or [DD Initiatives-SWI](#)

## Sign Up for Our Email List

If you aren't receiving email updates and newsletters from BHDDH, you can [sign up here](#) or on our website. Go to

<https://bhddh.ri.gov/developmentaldisabilities/events/newsandupdates/> to sign up or to see past quarterly newsletters and issues of DD News.

> SIGN UP FOR THE BHDDH NEWSLETTER

## Contacting DD Staff

See the full Division Contact List attached to this newsletter.

Monday-Friday  
8:30 AM - 4:00 PM  
call **(401) 462-3421**

Para español, llame **(401) 462-3014**

Send general questions to the AskDD email address.

[BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov](mailto:BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov)

Please do not email critical issues.

## BH Link is Here for You



BH Link's mission is to ensure all Rhode Islanders experiencing mental health and substance use crises receive the appropriate services they need as quickly as possible in an environment that supports their recovery. Visit the BH Link website at [www.bhlink.org](http://www.bhlink.org).

If under 18 CALL: **(855) KID (543)-LINK (5465)**

VISIT the 24-HOUR/7-DAY Triage Center at:  
**975 Waterman Avenue, East Providence, RI**

Call **911** if there is a risk of immediate danger.

If you or someone you know needs support now, call or text **988** or chat [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org)





## Division of Developmental Disabilities - All Staff Contacts

**Main Phone #:** (401) 462-3421    **TDD:** (401) 462-3226    **Website:** <https://bhddh.ri.gov/>  
**Fax:** (401) 462-2775    **Spanish Line:** (401) 462-3014    **BH Link:** (401) 414-5465

**To report abuse/neglect:**  
**(401) 462-2629**

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# THE LEADERSHIP SERIES

Advocates in Action is now accepting applications for the Leadership Series Class of 2024! **The deadline to apply is Friday, January 19th, 2024.**

## About the Leadership Series

The Leadership Series is an in-depth learning experience that's user-friendly, interactive, informative, and fun! We created the Series with a team of Self-Advocates and other allies to empower Rhode Islanders aged 18 and older who have an intellectual/developmental disability (I/DD) to speak up for themselves, navigate the DD System, connect with the community, and live life on their own terms, just like everyone else does!

While the Series is designed primarily for individuals who have an I/DD, family members, staff, and friends who will be supporting a class member are also welcome to apply.

Applicants don't need to read or write to participate in the Series. We present information in a variety of formats, including pictures, video, music, games, art, and more, to make the content engaging, inclusive, and accessible. We also have a team of Leadership Series graduates who work for our organization as Peer Mentors who will be available to answer questions, assist with homework, and support class members throughout our time together.

The Series begins with a virtual retreat on **Wednesday, February 7th, from 10:30 am - 2:30pm**, followed by weekly classes that meet over Zoom. **Classes meet every Wednesday from 1:00-2:30 pm**, beginning **February 7<sup>th</sup>** and ending **June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024**.

Each class focuses on different topics about Self-Awareness, Self-Determination, and Self-Advocacy. Some of the things you'll learn about include:

- About the RI Developmental Disabilities Service System
- Qualities of an Effective Leader
- Community Integration
- Disability Rights
- How Government Works and How to Vote
- Making Informed Decisions
- Person-Centered Thinking & Individualized Service Plans
- Personal Introduction and Communication Skills
- Public Speaking and Presentation Skills
- Technology Tips
- And More!

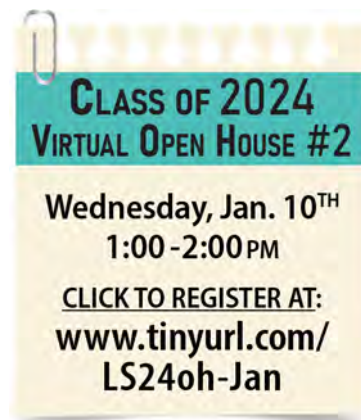
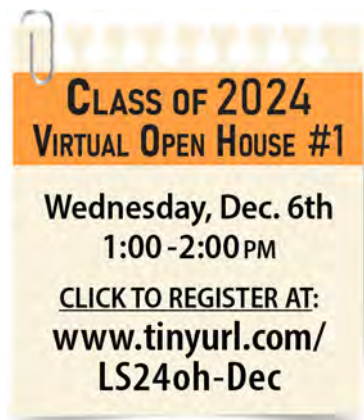


## Requirements

There's no cost to apply, but you must be a Rhode Island resident with a developmental disability, age 18 or older, or celebrating your 18th birthday in 2024, to participate. Those who will be supporting a fellow class member who meets these qualifications are also welcome to apply.

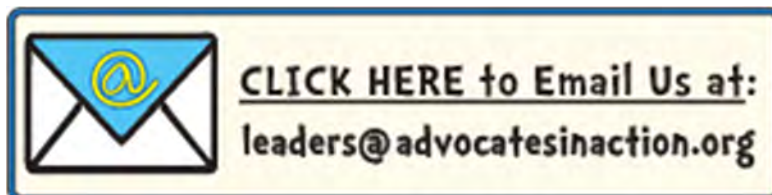
## Want to Learn More?

Click the links below to register for an informational open house:



## Any Questions?

Click the button below to email Advocates in Action at [leaders@advocatesinaction.org](mailto:leaders@advocatesinaction.org).



## Ready to Apply?

Click the button below to visit the Advocates in Action website to learn how to complete an online application at [www.advocatesinaction.org/leaders24-apply](http://www.advocatesinaction.org/leaders24-apply).





**REGISTER HERE**

**Event:** The Individual Support Plan (ISP)

**Time:** December 12 at 6:00 PM

**Location:** [Zoom \[r20.rs6.net\]](https://r20.rs6.net)

Join us for an insightful presentation hosted by the RIPIN Self-Directed Support Program with Anne LeClerc, Associate Director of Program Performance, Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals (BHDDH), and Andrew Whalen, Peer Mentor from Advocates in Action (AinA). This webinar is about the "Individual Support Plan (ISP)", **a planning document that guides services.**

At this event, we will explore the essential aspects of the Individual Support Plan and provide guidance on how to initiate and navigate the process effectively. We will be answering questions such as: What is it, and where do we start? What should be considered? We will also review the form.

To secure your spot, please [RSVP](#) by December 11th. The presentation will be recorded and made available to all registrants after the event concludes. So, whether you can make it or not, we encourage you to register so that you can receive a link to the recording.

This presentation is part of the RIPIN Self-Directed Support Program, designed to empower individuals and families with the knowledge and tools they need. If you have any questions or need assistance, feel free to contact us at [selfdirectedsupport@ripin.org](mailto:selfdirectedsupport@ripin.org).

Looking forward to seeing you at the webinar!

**SIGN UP TODAY!**

RIPIN is committed to providing universal access to all of our events. Please contact [communicationsteam@ripin.org](mailto:communicationsteam@ripin.org) to request disability accommodations (e.g., sign language interpreters, alternative formats). Advance notice is necessary to arrange for some accessibility needs.





# Working While Disabled—Work Incentives Sessions

## Registration Now Open! Work Incentives sessions for SSI and SSDI Beneficiaries

### SSDI Overview:

November 29, 2023, 12-1 pm

### Working with Benefits - Yes, You Can!

December 13, 2023, 12-1 pm

### SSI Overview:

January 31, 2024, 12-1 pm

### Work Pays! An Introduction to YOUTH SSI Work Incentives

January 17, 2024, 12-1 pm



*ALL sessions are offered on Zoom  
with subtitles in English.*

**REGISTER ONLINE at** <https://bit.ly/2KkUCVQ>

The Sherlock Center provides Work Incentive Information and Benefits Counseling services to SSI and SSDI beneficiaries and those that support them (family, guardian, rep payee, professionals). These sessions will be of value to anyone looking for a basic introduction to disability-related work incentives and/or has related questions. The Work and Benefits Introduction is for those starting to think about working and have general questions. The SSI or SSDI sessions provide details about the specific work incentives and other related information. All sessions provide an opportunity for you to ask questions about the following topics:

- Ticket to Work
- SSI or SSDI Work Incentives
- Resources about Work Incentive Information
- Access to Benefits Counseling
- Working and Impact on Health Insurance Medicaid/Medicare
- Other questions related to benefits and working

When you register, please share your questions.

NOTE: These sessions will not address how to apply for SSI or SSDI benefits.

## IMPORTANT CHANGES FOR 2024

Social Security has announced a 3.2% COLA (cost of living adjustment) for 2024. You can view new allowance amounts at <https://bit.ly/45ZaFji>

**TIP:** Unsure if you receive SSI or SSDI? You can confirm which benefit you have at <https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/>

**Presented by Certified Work Incentives Counselors.**

**Registration:** Advance registration is required. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the session. You can access the session by computer, mobile device or listen using a cell or landline phone.

**Questions or Accommodations:** Contact Vanessa Hollands at [vhollands@ric.edu](mailto:vhollands@ric.edu), 401-456-8072.

**Session questions:** Contact Joshua Hughes, [jhughes@ric.edu](mailto:jhughes@ric.edu), 401-456-4734 or Vicki Ferrara, [vferrara@ric.edu](mailto:vferrara@ric.edu), 401-456-8092



# PERSON-CENTERED THINKING FACILITATOR TRAINING

## Winter Session - Register by 12/22/23

### Course Description:

Person-Centered Thinking is a process that (a) prepares the person to actively participate in the planning process; (b) maps community opportunities, resources and supports; (c) describes the person's capacities, needs and interests; (d) develops a plan that helps the person achieve a high-quality community life; and (e) measures the person's progress towards achieving the plan.

The Person-Centered Thinking Facilitator Training teaches the knowledge and skills the facilitator needs to get ready for the plan, create the plan and put the plan into action with the individual.

To get the most from this course, it is recommended that learners identify an individual with whom they might engage in person-centered planning. The course will provide the opportunity to practice the skills and knowledge learned and to reflect on learner experiences.

### Course Details:

This training will take place over 3 months and will require approximately a 40-hour commitment to successfully complete the course. Learners will complete 11 online modules, quizzes, 3 assignments, and attend 4 instructor-led group sessions via Zoom. Download the course description for complete details.

Learners will use Moodle, an online platform, to independently access the course materials and assignments. Learners will also attend four required virtual group sessions with the instructor.

**The group sessions will take place from 10:00 –11:30 AM on January 9, January 30, February 20, and March 19.**

The course will open in Moodle on December 27, allowing learners up to 2 weeks to complete initial readings and an orientation to Moodle before the first group session.

### Technology Requirements:

To access Moodle and participate in the group sessions, learners will need a computer, laptop or tablet with internet access and a camera. We recommend using the latest version of Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer, Microsoft Edge, or Safari for the best Moodle experience.

Every effort has been made to create this course and course documents in an accessible format. All course materials will be provided electronically using Moodle and email.

**Register Online by December 22 at <http://bit.ly/2xeV6pT>**

This free online course is available to those supporting persons with I/DD living in Rhode Island. Priority registration will be given to support coordinators, managers and other front-line supervisors supporting persons with I/DD, as well as families and people with lived experience in Rhode Island.

If you need a reasonable accommodation (e.g., ASL/close captions) to participate in this course, please indicate your request on the registration form. For registration questions, contact Vanessa Hollands at [vhollands@ric.edu](mailto:vhollands@ric.edu) or call 401-456-8072, TTY via RI Relay: 711.

# Free digital skills workshops at the Cranston Senior Center.



**Free and walk-in workshops!**  
(max. capacity 10 participants)

**The Cranston Senior Enrichment Center**  
1070 Cranston St.

**Tuesdays, 9:30 - 11:30 am**  
October 31 to December 12, 2023

**Learn the basics to use the computer and your cell phone:**

<b>Oct 31</b> Internet	<b>Nov 7</b> Video conferencing	<b>Nov 14</b> Cybersecurity
<b>Nov 28</b> Email	<b>Dec 5</b> Mobile devices (Android)	<b>Dec 12</b> Mobile devices (iOS)

**Contact Lina Bravo for more info:**  
[lbravo@provlib.org](mailto:lbravo@provlib.org) or (401) 660-3344 call/text

SUPPORTED BY:



Presented by Cranston Public Library, Providence Public Library, y el Cranston Senior Enrichment Center.



## ***Transformation Grant***

“RI WINS (Workforce Investment & New Solutions)” is the name utilized by the RI Cross Disability Coalition for our DD Transformation Grant in collaboration with the RI Developmental Disabilities Council (RIDDC) and Skills for RI’s Future. This newsletter provides information on the status of implementation of the goal areas within the project and efforts to educate and provide support to people with disabilities, staff from community agencies, and RI employers on creating sustainable change for meaningful and inclusive lives for individuals with disabilities.

This is the first time the training has included participants beyond DD community agencies such as staff from State Behavioral Health, The Providence Center, Gateway Healthcare, Office of Rehabilitation Services and Department of Labor and Training.



*Doug Crandell and Sue Babin*

Doug Crandell recently conducted the fourth round of the Transformation Grant’s 3-day Employer Engagement Training for support agencies. During these trainings, participants learned how the process of knowledge transfer, group work and developing effective employer connections in Rhode Island can help facilitate the critical relationships between businesses and agencies that can lead to customized employment opportunities for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD). The trainings are funded by a grant from the Division of Disabilities.

Following the previous two days of sessions to learn the model’s best practices, day three culminated in presentations by each group with a friendly competition and a prize for the one voted best by all the participants. Each presentation contained details from their tour, interviews, market

research, Q&A to uncover the company’s “pain points,” with their combined insights gleaned about the company culture informing their final document.



*Amy Weinstein, Claire Haines*

Colleagues at specific agencies were assigned to work with members of other participating agencies with the goal of establishing and nurturing new relationships between organizations. Through this collaboration new and lasting relationships will be created between businesses willing to participate in the program. For businesses, the project aims to schedule informational interviews with various employers to determine their workforce needs, and to identify strategies or solutions to meet those needs through potential job opportunities for people with disabilities, a business-within-a-business for individuals involved with self-employment, or a continued relationship with the employer over time. For people with disabilities, it opens the door to work opportunities.

The recent training cohort of 23 individuals across six teams from RASOI (Indian Restaurant), Cup of Joe Kitchen and Café, Tucker Lucas and Associates (CPA), Thundermist (Community health center), Luigi’s (Italian restaurant) and Landmark (community hospital) is representative of



*Danna Spencer, Paul Ouellette, Brian LaFauci*



agencies providing resources and assistance in the fields of I/DD, behavioral health, substance abuse, and transition/adult. For five team members, this was their first time working on an initiative that directly related to assisting individuals with I/DD.



Project leader Sue Babin opened the three-hour long session by saying that the project “was really powerful this time around.” She also announced that there are plans to launch another training, which will exceed the requirements of the initial project scope.

Building a community of practice for the teams is a key focus led by Skills for RI’s Future. Going forward, it allows participants to recognize that there is access to a platform where they can share opportunities and collaborate on materials in real-time. This “hub” for business engagement – in addition to monthly coaching calls - also works in tandem with the transformation grant’s goal of connecting people, allowing participants to share employer job offers with others when the interviewing organization doesn’t have a matching candidate - or when things “just don’t come together” within an individual organization.



*Emilee O'Connor, Andrea Saqib, Josette Sobers*



*Christopher Tanguay, Pholla Hang-Casale, Rachel Pavao, Seth Piccolo*



*Lori Ann Ethier, Michele Dellamorte, Alan Atwood, Jennifer Mencarini, Natalie LaRoche*



Josette Sobers, Mirasia Cassese, Elvys Ruis, Emilee O'Connor

## Exploring Culinary Excellence at Rasoi

When it comes to experiencing the vibrant tapestry of flavors that Indian cuisine has to offer, few places can rival the authenticity and charm of Rasoi, an Indian restaurant nestled in the heart of Pawtucket. A recent meeting with the owner, Sanjeev, shed light on the restaurant's rich history, its commitment to quality, and the guiding philosophy that shapes its success.

Born in India, Sanjeev's passion for hospitality ignited during his time in Austria, where he pursued a degree in culinary arts. He then embarked on a stint with a luxury hotel chain before crossing borders to the United States and enrolling at Johnson and Wales for his graduate degree.

Through anecdotes and personal insights, Sanjeev revealed the transformative power of learning from one's own mistakes. His words resonated with the inherent challenges of running a business, where every twist and turn becomes a valuable lesson. "You learn from your mistakes," he emphasized, underscoring the significance of self-improvement and resilience.

A central theme emerged during the conversation was the importance of fostering a supportive and approachable environment. Sanjeev's leadership style is grounded in the belief that true leaders are those who encourage dialogue and ensure that employees feel comfortable voicing their concerns. This approach, he pointed out, builds an environment where communication flows freely, fostering a sense of belonging and trust within the team.

Rasoi physical space reflects its commitment to excellence, with a pristine space showcasing a dedication to sanitation and customer satisfaction. Sanjeev's keen eye for detail was evident as he walked us through the neat and organized kitchen – a testament to the emphasis on providing fresh and high-quality ingredients.

The restaurant's impact extends beyond the culinary experience. Sanjeev's compassionate approach to management became evident through the tale of overseas employees navigating cultural nuances. He recognized their challenges and responded generously, supplementing their tips from his pocket. This gesture highlighted his commitment to creating a positive work environment that nurtures both the team and the business.

In other instances, he has gone above and beyond to ensure that the restaurant is accommodating to a diverse clientele - including making modifications to ensure that guests requiring wheelchair access were easily able to access the building and - in one case, working with his staff to personally help lift a wheelchair into the building. He is a firm believer in "Atithi Devo Bhava" - an Indian phrase that translates to "Guest Is God," and the idea that providing your guests - whether in your home or your business - with the most impeccable, welcoming, and nurturing experience is the absolute first priority.

Sanjeev's forward-thinking mindset also extends to business sustainability. Recognizing the potential of collaboration, he expressed interest in working with employees within the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) community. This approach aligns with his broader vision of creating a harmonious and growth-focused environment for everyone involved.

Rasoi's longevity and success stand as a testament to Sanjeev's philosophy that each customer's visit is an opportunity to provide nourishment through cuisine and meaningful interactions. The commitment to nurturing the team and a willingness to evolve with changing times has solidified Rasoi as a cornerstone of culinary excellence in Pawtucket.





## Empowering the Community: *Cup of Joe's Commitment to Inclusivity and Impact*



Team Members; Lorraine Lesniak, Alyssa Buco, Sue Pollard, Scott DeAscentis

### ***Cup of Joe's Commitment to Inclusivity and Impact***

In a world often focused on profits and bottom lines, there are shining examples of businesses that prioritize people over numbers, community over transactions. At a recent meeting, a conversation unfolded that revealed the remarkable story of Cup of Joe's, a local establishment that isn't just about serving coffee and treats; it's about fostering an inclusive haven for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

As the dialogue unfolded, it became evident that Cup of Joe's isn't your typical coffee shop. Mike and Kenny, have created an environment that doesn't just serve the community – it embraces it. What sets them apart is their unwavering commitment to inclusivity and, specifically their mission to include people with I/DD on their team.

#### **Turning Compassion into Action**

Mike's vision extends far beyond brewing coffee and baking treats. He's committed to empowering those with I/DD by providing meaningful opportunities for them within his business. From offering training and certification programs to holding baking classes tailored to individuals with differing abilities, Mike is proving that businesses can play an instrumental role in supporting the professional development of those often marginalized by society.

#### **A Multifaceted Approach to Inclusion**

Cup of Joe's isn't just creating a space for those with I/DD to thrive professionally; it's creating a culture of acceptance and understanding. By designing a menu that accommodates food allergies and ensuring a safe and inclusive environment, Mike and Kenny are dismantling barriers and fostering a sense of belonging. Their commitment to employing people with I/DD resonates not only with their team but with every customer who walks through their doors.

#### **A Beacon of Change in the Community**

Beyond the walls of the coffee shop, Mike and Kenny are deeply involved in supporting and uplifting the community. Their philanthropic efforts, ranging from fundraising for accident victims to actively contributing to local charities, demonstrate their dedication to being a force for good. These actions reflect their belief that businesses, especially those deeply connected to their communities, can be powerful instruments of positive change.

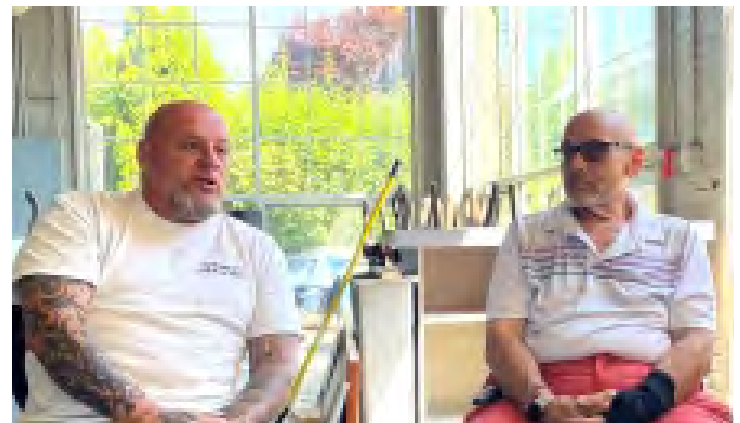
#### **A Call to Collaborate**

While Cup of Joe's has already made substantial strides, there's more to be done. Challenges such as equipment shortages and staffing gaps are real obstacles, but the beauty of their approach lies in collaboration. Mike and Kenny understand that through unity and partnerships with other local businesses, they can overcome these challenges and continue making a lasting impact.

#### **An Inclusive Legacy in the Making**

Cup of Joe's isn't merely a coffee shop; it's a living testament to the profound impact that businesses can have on individuals and communities. Mike has woven inclusivity, empowerment, and compassion into the very fabric of their establishment. Their journey serves as a reminder that businesses, regardless of their size, can become catalysts for change, uplifting those who often stand on the fringes of society.

In a world where divisions persist, Cup of Joe's is a shining example of the transformative power of unity, empathy, and unwavering dedication to making a difference. As their doors open to a diverse clientele, they also open the door to a future where every cup of coffee comes with a side of compassion and a whole lot of heart.



Mike and Kenny from Cup of Joe



## Building Community through Commitment and Values



### *The Story of Tucker Lucas and Associates*

In a world where business often takes center stage, there are individuals who stand out by embodying their values and using their platforms to make a positive impact. One such individual is Dan Tucker, the sole owner of Tucker Lucas and Associates, an accounting firm with a unique approach to business that revolves around community, trust, and dedication. Here's what the team found...

#### **A Man of Many Roles**

Trust, honesty, integrity, credibility, communication, caring, kindness, and flexibility are some of the core values that guide Dan's approach to business. These values have led to his unique vision: a business that not only serves its clients but also actively contributes to the well-being of the community it operates in. Dan's commitment to his family shines through in his aspirations. He expressed that he doesn't want to miss out on moments with his family, such as picking up his kids from school and going on vacations. This emphasis on work-life balance goes beyond mere lip service; it's a testament to his dedication to his family and his understanding of what truly matters in life.



*Dan Tucker*

#### **Serving the Community**

One remarkable aspect of Dan's business philosophy is his desire to serve the community while keeping his business goals in sight. He doesn't let financial gains dictate his every move; instead, he places his values and the needs of the community at the forefront. This approach not only reflects his authenticity but also underscores his commitment to making a positive impact.

While the conversation highlighted Dan's strengths and values, it also revealed certain unmet needs within his business. Observations were made about areas such as organization, hospitality, office decor, and marketing strategy. These insights were shared with Dan to provide potential solutions that could further enhance his business's success, including working with individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD) to fill his unmet needs while also providing opportunities for the community.



*Fernanda Furtado, Dena Brown, Cythia Woodruff, Christiana Otele*

#### **Building Relationships, One Conversation at a Time**

Dan Tucker's story is a reminder that business is more than transactions; it's about building relationships, fostering trust, and serving the community. Through his dedication to his core values and his unwavering commitment to his family and clients, he's setting an example for business owners everywhere. His approach reminds us that success is not just measured by profits but by the positive impact we leave on those around us. As we navigate the complexities of the business world, let's remember Dan's words: "Be kind, build good relationships, and everything else will come through."

