

# LEVY AWARD WINNER

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# IN THE MAINSTREAM

WINTER 2025

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# LEADERSHIP LETTERS

I'm at the Merrick House sitting at their dining room table and the UNO cards are being passed around. Tonight, Dena, the house manager, chose the No Mercy version. No one knows the rules – except Dena. The girls are fully engaged because they want to win but they want Akeisha, one of their favorite staff, to lose even more. Each turn is unpredictable.



Christine is on the verge of winning and then Danielle throws down a Draw 4. Elyse has only two cards then Maureen throws down a Skip Everyone. When it's Akeisha's turn, Nina throws out a Wild Draw 10 and because the No Mercy rules eliminate a player when they have 25 cards, Akeisha is out. The girls erupt in playful pandemonium.

This house is my adopted home. As a board member I have responsibilities that focus on CMA's strategic direction, financial health, and long-term stability. The Board meets eight times a year, we serve on at least one committee, and we attend fund-raising events like our recent Comedy Night. As Board President I also have the opportunity to work with Eileen Egan, our remarkable leader.

As much as I find this board work rewarding, none of it compares to spending time with the Merrick girls.

There's Nina who loves K-pop music. One day when my teenage daughter joined me, Nina wanted to know if she liked K-pop too. And then there's Christine, she shares the next play she'll be in, like Sponge Bob, and I'll make a note in my calendar hoping I will be free to see it. Maureen lights up when she talks about visiting her sister and her niece. Instead of playing UNO, Caroline wants to finish her chores, which is shorthand for getting ready for bed. Invariably one of the amazing staff, Dena, Akeisha, Gigi or Rashida will convince her to play one round. Elyse is a bit shy, though once you mention a topic of interest, like her activities at Day Hab she joins the conversation. Finally there's Danielle, the sports fan. She's easy to banter with over the Yankees or any NY team...





Occasionally, one or two of the girls will share how they miss their dad.

And I think they must have lost him recently, because their sadness is so raw.

Then they remind me their dad died years ago.

I understand this too.

I have a particular memory of Christmas Day. We are spending it with my dad's cousin. "Ante-up" Everyone tosses a penny into the center of the table. No big winners here as you can only raise a nickel. I am the youngest and the rules of poker are still fresh.

"Oh, look she's got a winner," Dad says. The ability to conceal the thrill of being dealt a card to complete a full-house wasn't yet possible. But I was a quick learner and began to adapt. I learned to play when I was seven. I think my competitive drive began the day of that poker game. Though when I play UNO with the Merrick girls, I put aside my need to win because I derive much more joy from watching one of them say "UNO out." You may wonder why CMA Board members volunteer their time. Some volunteer because they have family members supported by CMA, others feel the pull because they want to give back to a community that needs us.

I can trace my desire to my dad. His legacy is more than teaching his daughter to be a good poker player. He was a selfless man that would do anything for a person in need, like replacing a neighbor's broken sink pipe at no cost (he was a plumber) or picking up a hapless hitchhiker who looked like he needed a friend to talk to. We only had ten years together, but he taught me the best life lesson.

To be generous is a reward that's worth the cost.

Wishing you all a wonderful holiday season,  
Maria Massei-Rosato  
CMA Board President



# WINTER 2025

Dear Families and Friends,

As we approach the end of the year, it is a wonderful time to pause and reflect on all that we are grateful for. I am truly thankful for the dedication, compassion, and passion of our CMA employees, who continue to make a meaningful difference every single day. Their tireless commitment to the individuals we serve inspires me beyond words.

This year, we were pleased to raise the DSP salaries by \$2 per hour—a positive step forward. Yet, we recognize that this increase is only a small drop in the bucket compared to what is needed to fairly compensate our incredible caregivers for the essential work they do. Their value cannot be overstated, and our advocacy for fair wages and resources will continue with determination.

I am deeply grateful for our extremely generous donors and for all who attended CMA's Golf and Comedy events this year. Your generosity and enthusiasm fuel our mission and make our work possible.

We are also thankful for the new individuals and families who have joined our CMA community. It has been a joy to welcome you and to celebrate the accomplishments of our program participants. This year, we proudly supported over 50 individuals with developmental disabilities in achieving or maintaining competitive employment and we are currently assisting more than 50 others as they pursue their own employment goals. These milestones remind us of the importance of opportunity, inclusion, and perseverance—values that define the spirit of CMA.

At the same time, we remain mindful of the challenges ahead. Turbulent times in government funding and policy shifts can impact the stability of the services our community relies on. We will continue to advocate for fair and sustainable funding to ensure that individuals with developmental disabilities have access to the support they deserve.

As we move forward together, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to every one of you—our staff, families, friends, and supporters. Your belief in our mission keeps us strong and hopeful for the future. Wishing you a joyful holiday season and a new year filled with peace, gratitude, and connection.

With warm regards,



EILEEN MCDONALD EGAN  
Chief Executive Officer





# LEVY AWARD WINNER



## Meet our 2025 Levy Award Winner: CMA's Outstanding Employee of the Year, Johane Romulus

We are pleased to announce that Johane Romulus is the winner of the 2025 Levy Family award. This prestigious award recognizes the staff member who best embodies our mission and vision while serving as a role model for colleagues and the individuals we support.

Johane has been with CMA for over 13 years and is currently a Medical Counselor in our residence. Johane received three nominations from a peer, supervisor and family member. Johane consistently demonstrates exceptional reliability, is a team player and goes above and beyond in everything she does. She's a wonderful representative for CMA and we are so lucky to have her!

Our three finalists were: **Jessenia Lara, Cleon Nelson, Melika Nurse**  
Congratulations to all of you!!

# STAFF HIGHLIGHT

## Celebrating 20 Years of Excellence: Dena Pittman

This year, Community Mainstreaming Associates proudly celebrates the 20th anniversary of one of our most dedicated and inspiring leaders—Dena Pittman, Residence Manager and unwavering champion for the adults with developmental disabilities we support.

Dena's journey at CMA began two decades ago when she joined the organization as a Direct Support Professional, living in at our Avenue C residence. From the moment she stepped through the door, it was clear she possessed not only a deep commitment to the mission, but a genuine heart for service and connection.

Her compassion, energy, and natural leadership quickly set her apart. Over the years, Dena went on to manage several residences, and for the last several years has successfully led CMA's newest home, the Malverne residence, guiding its growth and fostering an environment where women who live there.



Dena doesn't just focus on the people we support but includes the families as members of our team. No matter which program she oversees, families trust that she will do what is right for their loved ones. One parent recently stated, "with Dena in charge of the house, we know everything is going to be taken care of."

Dena's impact extends far beyond one residence or job title. She has always been willing to take on additional responsibilities in support of CMA's mission. For years, she led our recreation programming, creating inclusive, joyful, and meaningful experiences that brought our participants together. Whether running BINGO events, coordinating Halloween parties, orchestrating bowling leagues or our annual winter ball, her dedication to enhancing quality of life has been a gift to both residents and staff.

A true mentor and leader, Dena has played an instrumental role in training new managers and shaping future generations of leadership within CMA. Through her guidance, multiple direct support staff have developed their skills, grown their confidence, and ultimately advanced into management roles—an incredible testament to her ability to lead by example and nurture talent. Dena demonstrates that leadership involves partnerships and a willingness to "roll up our sleeves" to ensure the best for the people we support.

Perhaps most remarkable is Dena's ability to build lasting, genuine relationships. She is deeply connected to the people she supports and their families, always ensuring that families feel included, heard, and supported every step of the way. Her warmth, compassion, and dedication have fostered trust and partnership that are invaluable to our mission and our community. One former resident that Dena worked with stated, "she was my best manager ever, but don't tell my new manager!" When asked why she was the "best", they stated "she taught me how to take care of myself, and she taught me how to cook and how to be a friend!"

For 20 years, Dena has exemplified commitment, professionalism, and heart. She is a cornerstone of CMA's residential program and an inspiration to all who have had the privilege to work with her. Please join us in celebrating Dena Pittman for her two decades of service, leadership, and unwavering dedication. Thank you, Dena, for all you have done—and continue to do—for the CMA family.



# EVENT RECAP

## Laughter, Legacy, and Community: CMA Celebrates 20 Years of Comedy Night



Community Mainstreaming Associates (CMA) marked a major milestone on October 16 as friends, supporters, and community partners gathered at the Inn at New Hyde Park to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of CMA's Annual Comedy Night. The evening was filled with laughter, heartfelt moments, and a deep sense of community — all in support of CMA's mission to empower individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live meaningful, inclusive lives.

This year's show featured a powerhouse lineup of comedians — Pete Lee, Kerri Louise, Steven Scott, Mike Finoia, Harrison Greenbaum, and Mike Vecchione — who kept the audience laughing all night long. The talented Ray Ellin not only served as Event Chair, but also took the stage as the evening's MC, keeping the show's energy high with his trademark wit, warmth, and humor.

A highlight of the celebration was the recognition of Jerry Pinsky and the Pinsky Family, honored for their over 40 years of unwavering support for Community Mainstreaming. The Pinsky Family's generosity and partnership have played an invaluable role in CMA's growth, helping to expand programs and create opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities throughout Long Island.





The tribute to Jerry Pinsky included a moving speech from Mark Engel, who reflected on Jerry's leadership, kindness, and the meaningful legacy he has built alongside his family. The room was filled with emotion as attendees celebrated not only Jerry's individual contributions but also the shared dedication of a family deeply rooted in CMA's mission.

The evening also included a special announcement from Eileen Egan, who shared that CMA's home in Massapequa will be named in honor of Andrew Liebhaber in recognition of his generosity and ongoing commitment to the organization. The announcement drew heartfelt applause, underscoring the profound impact of Andrew's support on CMA's work and the lives it touches.

CMA extended its heartfelt gratitude to Event Chairs Ray Ellin, Matthew Engel, and Jim Slattery for their leadership, vision, and tireless efforts in organizing this milestone event. Their continued dedication over the years has been essential in making Comedy Night one of CMA's most beloved and successful annual traditions.

As CMA celebrates two decades of Comedy Night, the evening served as a joyful reminder of what makes the organization's mission so meaningful — laughter that unites, compassion that uplifts, and a community that continues to grow stronger with every year.

CMA thanks its sponsors, volunteers, staff, and everyone who helped make the 20th Anniversary Comedy Night a resounding success — proving once again that together, we can create opportunities that inspire inclusion, empowerment, and joy for all.



# BOARD HIGHLIGHT

## CMA Board Member

### Johnathan Lerner Honored at Jewish National Fund Golf Outing

Community Mainstreaming Associates (CMA) proudly congratulates Board Member Johnathan Lerner, who was recently honored at the Jewish National Fund (JNF) Golf Outing. The event, which brought together community leaders and supporters for a day of golf and philanthropy, recognized Johnathan's outstanding leadership, professional accomplishments, and deep commitment to giving back to the community.

Johnathan was celebrated alongside co-honoree and fellow CMA supporter Bruce Azus, as both were recognized for their ongoing contributions to charitable causes and their dedication to making a positive impact on the lives of others.



Several of Johnathan's fellow CMA Board Members and Executive Director Eileen Egan attended the dinner to show their support and celebrate this well-deserved honor. Their presence reflected the admiration and respect Johnathan has earned not only within CMA, but across the broader Long Island community.

"Johnathan's leadership and generosity have had a lasting impact on Community Mainstreaming," said Eileen Egan, CEO of CMA. "We are so proud to see him recognized for his commitment to service, philanthropy, and inclusion. His dedication inspires all of us."

As a long-time member of CMA's Board of Directors, Johnathan has played an important role in advancing the organization's mission — helping to expand opportunities and enhance quality of life for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. His recognition by the Jewish National Fund highlights the far-reaching influence of his compassion, leadership, and advocacy.

CMA extends heartfelt congratulations to Johnathan Lerner and Bruce Azus on this meaningful honor, and gratitude to all who joined in celebrating their achievements.





# PROGRAMS

**Community Programs is growing:  
The administrative office has a new home**



CMA's Community Programs have expanded into a new administrative office space! This growth reflects our ongoing commitment to providing exceptional support and opportunities for the people we serve. Our Community Programs—including Self Direction/Fiscal Intermediaries, Supported Employment, Pre-Vocational Services, Community Habilitation, and Day Habilitation—continue to thrive and evolve. The new space will allow our dedicated team to collaborate more effectively and further enhance the quality of services that empower individuals to live, work, and participate fully in their communities.



# Malverne: 5 Years!

**The Malverne residence recently celebrated its five-year anniversary.**



To mark this special milestone, the ladies enjoyed a lavish dinner and an exciting visit to the circus.

They are thrilled to have spent the past five years living together as friends, creating wonderful memories and experiencing personal growth in their CMA home. The Malverne ladies love celebrating these moments and look forward to many more milestones and joyful occasions at CMA.





# The Commissioner's Visit

## OPWDD Commissioner Willow Baer Visits Community Mainstreaming Associates



We were honored to welcome **OPWDD Commissioner Willow Baer** and members of her leadership team for a site visit to learn more about CMA's programs, services, and commitment to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The visit began at CMA's main office, where CMA Senior Staff delivered an engaging presentation to the Commissioner's team. The presentation provided an overview of CMA's mission, innovative programs, and the organization's ongoing efforts to provide person-centered supports that promote inclusion, independence, and dignity.

Following the presentation, the Commissioner and her team visited one of CMA's Day Habilitation Without Walls sites at Blue Lotus Yoga and Wellness in East Meadow. There, the group had the opportunity to see firsthand how CMA integrates wellness, mindfulness, and community engagement into its day habilitation programming. The visit highlighted how partnerships like Blue Lotus help participants develop new skills and build meaningful connections within the community.

The day concluded with a visit to CMA's Day Habilitation site, where the Commissioner participated in a productive and informative Q&A session with staff and leadership. This open discussion provided valuable insight into both the successes and challenges facing provider agencies and offered a forum to explore how OPWDD can best support organizations like CMA in their vital work.

CMA is deeply grateful to Commissioner Baer and her team for taking the time to learn what makes our organization special — the dedication of our staff, the spirit of our participants, and our shared commitment to creating opportunities for individuals to lead fulfilling lives.

We look forward to continuing our collaboration with OPWDD to strengthen services, expand opportunities, and enhance quality of life for those we serve.

# Celebrating DSP Week:

## Honoring the Heart of Our Mission!



With summer winding down and a new season on the horizon, we kicked off September with a celebration of our amazing DSPs (Direct Support Professionals), honoring the incredible individuals who embody our mission every single day.

Our DSPs are the heartbeat of what we do, providing care, compassion, and strength to those who depend on us most.

Throughout the week, we rolled out the red carpet to show our appreciation! Staff were cheered on through spirited tunnels, showered with appreciation from parents, residents, and coworkers, and treated to a week filled with fun.

From BBQs and games to well-deserved recognition. Each DSP received a swag bag, certificate, and commemorative pin as tokens of our gratitude.





## It was a week of smiles, celebration, and heartfelt thanks

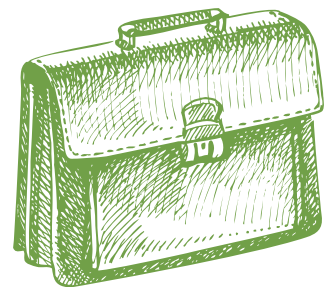
for those who keep our mission moving forward. Thank you to our DSPs for your dedication, compassion, and everyday heroism, you truly make a difference!



# LOOKING FOR A JOB?

**Start your impact today in these open roles:**

- Assistant Residence Manager
- Behavior Intervention Specialist
- Community Habilitation Specialist
- Day Habilitation Specialist
- Direct Support Professional
- Fundraising and Communications Coordinator
- Job Coach
- Medical Counselor
- Residence Manager



**APPLY NOW**



# BUILDING A LEGACY OF INCLUSION

## Leaving a Gift to CMA in Your Will:

At Community Mainstreaming Associates (CMA), our mission to create opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities depends on the generosity and compassion of our community. While annual giving and volunteerism make an immediate impact, one of the most meaningful ways to ensure that CMA's work continues for generations to come is through legacy giving.

A legacy gift, also known as a bequest, allows you to make a lasting difference by including CMA in your will or estate plans. This act of generosity ensures that your values — inclusion, dignity, and opportunity for all — live on through the programs and people whose lives you touch.

## Why Legacy Giving Matters:

Legacy gifts strengthen CMA's long-term sustainability, helping us expand vital services, maintain quality residential programs, and develop innovative initiatives that empower individuals to reach their fullest potential. Your planned gift ensures that CMA can continue to respond to the evolving needs of the community — today, tomorrow, and for decades to come.

## Simple Steps to Leave a Legacy Gift:

Leaving a gift to CMA in your will is easier than you might think. Here's how to get started:

1. Decide on the Type of Gift

You can choose to leave a specific dollar amount, a percentage of your estate, or a particular asset (such as securities or property).

2. Include CMA in Your Will or Trust

Your attorney can include simple language such as:

"I give [specific amount or percentage] to Community Mainstreaming Associates, a nonprofit organization located in Westbury, New York, for its general charitable purposes."

## Let Us Know

If you've included CMA in your estate plans, we'd love the opportunity to thank you and recognize your commitment to our mission. Your gift can remain anonymous if you prefer — but knowing your intentions helps us plan for the future with confidence.

**Consult Your Advisors:** Before finalizing your plans, we recommend consulting with your financial or legal advisors to ensure your gift aligns with your personal, family, and financial goals.

**Your Legacy, Their Future:** By making a legacy gift, you become part of CMA's enduring story — one built on compassion, inclusion, and opportunity. Your generosity ensures that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities will continue to thrive in supportive, empowering environments for generations to come.

If you'd like more information about leaving a legacy gift to CMA, please contact the development team at: [\(516\)-683-0710 ext. 101](tel:516-683-0710) or [dev@communitymainstreaming.org](mailto:dev@communitymainstreaming.org).

# CONSTRUCTION UPDATE & SAVE THE DATE

## Exciting Progress: The House Is Ready for Everyone's Return!



After two months of hard work and patience, there's finally light at the end of the tunnel! We're thrilled to announce that residents and staff will be returning to the house very soon — and everyone couldn't be happier.

The double bedroom and bathroom have been thoughtfully reconfigured, making the space feel larger and more comfortable. Even better, construction is now officially complete, with just a few minor punch-list items left to finish up.

Fire sprinklers have been installed throughout the house and are being enclosed in a new sheetrock soffit. Once painted, they'll blend seamlessly into the space — you'll hardly notice them except for the small sprinkler heads peeking through.

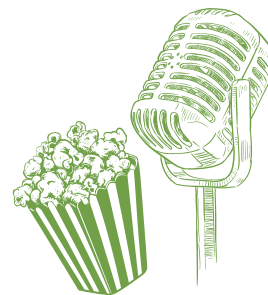
Next up, all the furniture will be moved back to its original places, and our cleaning contractor will give the entire house a deep, refreshing clean before everyone moves in.

By the time you read this, we hope life at the house is back to normal — and even better than before!

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS



**Golf**  
**May 11, 2026**



**Comedy Night**  
**October 2026**

[Click to Support](#)



It's November, and that means our End of Year Giving Campaign is just around the corner! Keep an eye on your inbox for inspiring stories and ways you can help CMA stay strong through uncertain times.