

SLI Connection



Supportive Living Inc. | Brain Injury Programs | Vol 75 / Summer 2020

COVID-19, CAUTION AND THE INTERN CLASS OF 2020



Social distancing Interns Erika, Kara (Wellness Mgr.), Helen, Danielle, Kaitlin, Paula, Andrew, Allison and Maddie (insert)

When Covid-19 hit us in March we immediately locked down our residential facilities to families and friends, cancelled Neuro-Wellness classes, put on hold community activities, and enforced strict safety protocols to adapt to this new environment. Our administrative staff moved their offices home, and the direct care staff at the residential programs - the frontline workers - showed remarkable strength and commitment as they came to work day after day while the uncertainties of the virus and its dangers grew.

We canceled the remainder of our spring internship program. That group of 12 interns had spent the previous six weeks assisting residents and community members of Neuro-Wellness. Their internship ended abruptly. Our world had changed.

By mid-May, after 60 days of isolation and inactivity, residents, and others we serve were ready for some type of fun. The new class of 16 summer interns were eager to learn the fate of the summer program. As the Phase 1 safety rules became

public it was clear that we could not run community programs. At best, with a smaller group of interns we could run modified, smaller, and safer classes for our residents only. On June 1, eight students joined us for the modified Summer Camp. We have included reflections from these interns throughout this newsletter. One goal of our intern program is to expose students to brain injury in a positive environment, and hopefully lead some to a career in the field. We thank them for a great summer and wish them well in the future.

INTERN REFLECTIONS

ANDREW C. - MCPHS UNIVERSITY

Most importantly this internship has taught me the value of forming personal connections and how much it can impact each resident's effort they put into each workout. Each resident's brain injury varies in severity along with their ability to physically and cognitively function. Each resident also has an attitude to put in their maximum effort and stay positive.



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SUMMER UPDATE - PRAISING A PROVEN PARTNERSHIP

It goes without saying that this year has provided us with more challenges than most. No one was ready for Covid-19. Yet we faced it, figured out a way to manage all the moving pieces to it – as best we could – and now continue under our new normal. We could not be more thankful for the supporting role everyone in the SLI community has played to keep us safe. No organization

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has played a more important role in this safety than our primary service partner, Advocates. Our goal is to deliver the highest quality services and care, and we leverage the expertise of multiple business partners to achieve it. Advocates, our largest and longest partnership, is a leading Human Services provider in the Commonwealth and has teamed with us since 2007. On behalf of our residents, families, Board of Directors, and other partners, we thank them for their dedication and care.

Peter J. Noonan
President

IN MEMORY OF DEAR FRIENDS

In 2016, Diane B., a neighbor of the Neuro-Wellness Center in Lexington, became one of our first exercise participants suffering from Parkinson's Disease. Over that period, while Diane's condition worsened, her kindness, positive attitude and contagious smile kept everyone in her class motivated. Very sadly, Diane lost her fight with Parkinson's Disease in early September. Our entire community will miss her.

We also would like to pass along our sincere condolences to Dr. Anna Pomfret, one of SLI's founding board members. In February, David Pomfret, MD, Anna's husband of 56 years, and father of their four children, passed away peacefully.



SLI Fitness Instructor Liz with Diane

INTERN REFLECTIONS

HELEN A. - SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY

Every resident I worked with this summer has influenced me in their own special way. Although many are in wheelchairs and may not be able to move certain parts of their body, they still work extremely hard. I have seen all of them push themselves during fitness.



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INTERN REFLECTIONS

ERIKA C. - UNION COLLEGE

As a neuroscience major, I have learned about the brain and the effects a brain injury can have. However, working with survivors of brain injuries has provided me with the real-life consequences a brain injury can have. Spending time with the residents always entailed lots of laughter and smiles. Whenever I was having a rough day, the residents always cracked some jokes and made my day better.



MADDIE K. - ENDICOTT COLLEGE

Going into this summer, I was worried I was not going to be able to find an internship because of what is going on in the world, but I was able to find one that was the perfect experience. My internship with SLI was my first real experience in the field, and that meant a lot to me. Connecting with the residents was the best part of this experience, and I hope I get to do something like this again.



DANIELLE S. - BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

I believe that everyone entering the health field should have an experience like I have at SLI. Working with this population has been eye opening in how I conduct myself and how health care workers should work to understand the barriers that their patient may face. I look forward to going to the houses each day and I am genuinely sad when a resident isn't able to make it to fitness that day.



FUNDRAISING & FRIENDS - Thank you to our Philanthropic Partners

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a serious financial impact on SLI. In March we cancelled Neuro-Wellness classes, along with the fee and grant revenue that they generate. In May we cancelled our annual golf tournament missing out on its proceeds.

Fortunately, our philanthropic partners stepped up and helped us with a strong spring fundraising appeal. The appeal and a loan from the US Small Business Association has kept us on solid ground. While we are running Neuro-Wellness programs this fall, they are smaller, reducing our fee income. We are planning two fall fundraising events; the annual Gala and the Battlegreen Run. These will both be virtual events, following the "new normal" in event fundraising. We are looking forward to testing this new model. *SLI is fortunate to have a number of long-term supporters – individual donors, corporate sponsors, and foundations. You are our **Philanthropic Partners**. You have supported us for years, many since our founding in 1991. You have believed in our mission and your support keeps us going. **We thank you.***



*Happy to be healthy
at McLaughlin House*

If you would like to make a donation, go to Supportivelivinginc.org click on: **How to help** then select: **Donate** or call us at **781-937-3199**. Thank you!

NEURO-FIT FROM SLI...WE KEEP GROWING, HELPING MORE SURVIVORS

Neuro-Fit has become SLI's cornerstone community-based Neuro-Wellness Class. This assisted exercise class, described in detail by the Intern Reflections, provides individuals living in SLI Residential facilities, and many other people affected by brain injury and other neurological disorders living in the community, with a full exercise regimen.

Few, if any, of these people have access to this type of exercise – it is either too expensive – or just not available. Yet, the benefits have proven in many ways – improved health, function and self-confidence. We are excited as we continue to grow, allowing us to help more people in need.



CLASSES RE-OPEN IN MARBLEHEAD

SLI's Neuro-Fit Assisted Exercise class at the Lynch/Van Otterloo YMCA in Marblehead will re-open with a modified class in September.

A NEW CLASS IN ANDOVER

This fall SLI is opening a Neuro-Fit Assisted Exercise program at the Merrimack Valley YMCA in Andover, partnering with Merrimack College, and their student interns. We look forward to our newest Neuro-Fit partnership, and helping improve life for more members of the brain-injury community.

2021 CLASSES IN GLOUCESTER

We are also planning to offer Neuro-Fit classes at the new Glen T. MacLeod YMCA in Gloucester, scheduled to open in early 2021.

INTERN REFLECTIONS

KAITLIN P. - UMASS AMHERST

I have learned so much about the brain, brain injuries, advocating for brain injury, fitness programming for brain injury patients, assistive technologies, and more. I learned an immense amount in such a short period of time while doing weekly research and projects and being able to take part in leading fitness class with the residents.



PAULA M. - SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY

I was in a class where a resident had a seizure. I went home and I wanted to know more, I did my own research. I wanted to know everything that I could. You can always read about medical conditions, but when you see it and even the influence that the fitness has on the individuals I want to know more, what more I can do to help.



ALLISON H. - BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

It was perfect that our first presentation was on the different regions of the brain and the effects damage to a specific region causes. This primed me to be in tune to the challenges the residents may be dealing with. Also, I really learned a lot when the presentation assignment was on different causes of brain injury: from TBI to stroke. I felt that learning the neurobiology of what happens in these events and made me feel intelligent on this and helped me gain confidence in my work.





Samples of Resident "Mail Art" on display



Nancy, standing left, oversees Art Class, Summer 2019

SLI RESIDENTS DISPLAY MAIL ART AT THE ROCKPORT ART ASSOCIATION MUSEUM

All eight residents of SLI's McLaughlin House created their own Mail Art and submitted to the Rockport Art Association Mail Art Exhibit. Mail Art is a hand-crafted post-card that portrays the sender's art on one side, and then a personal message on the other side. This project was the idea of Nancy Muise, SLI's Neuro-Wellness Art Instructor. Nancy is a member of the Rockport Art Association and when she heard of this project, she knew the residents would want to be involved. Congratulations to all.

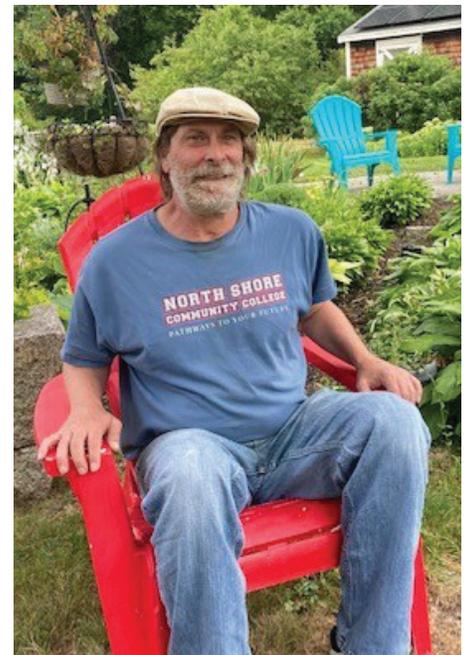


Postcards hanging as panels in the museum

OLD FARM ROCKPORT - RESIDENT PROFILE

Viktor was one day shy of 16 when he was a passenger in a car accident. He suffered a severe brain injury. Viktor spent the next 39 years living with his mother in Gloucester. When his mom died in the fall of 2016 Viktor's family wondered where he would live. They did not want him in a nursing home but saw few other options. Fortunately, an apartment at Old Farm Rockport became available in 2017 and within 30 days Viktor moved in. He did not socialize for a year, but now you find him in the gardens, going to the hardware store with neighbors, playing chess with staff, and going to a day program. According to Viktor he is living in "paradise". We are just happy he's happy.

"Moving Viktor to Old Farm was definitely the best thing that has happened to him, and has also taken a lot of worry off of his family's shoulders as he is in a beautiful and caring place." – Viktor's Sister-in-law



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**Support our team - SLI Neurons
in the *Virtual* 25th
Genesis Battlegreen Run**

Help us reach our goal of \$10,000! Join the team and run or walk 5K or 10K at a location of your choice between 10/25 and 11/1. Or simply donate. Or both.

**To learn more go to:
supportivelivinginc.org
or battlegreenrunfoundation.org**

**JOIN US
FOR A SPECIAL
VIRTUAL EVENT**

*The Sounds
of Music*

**The Neuroscience of Music
and the Mind**

**Thursday, October 22, 2020
7:00 - 7:45pm**

Music Guests from the Berklee College of Music, including
Ernesto Diaz, Assistance Professor and Performer
Neuroscience and the Mind Presentations from
Brian Harris, CEO of MedRhythms
Kathleen Howland, PhD., Berklee College of Music

To attend the event, you must register at:
<https://tinyurl.com/YYGJSXXG>

There is no fee to register, however we would appreciate a virtual ticket donation of \$100 (\$50 for those under age 30)

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Supportive Living, Inc. is a nonprofit organization with a mission to raise the quality of life for brain injury survivors by providing appropriate affordable housing, neuro-wellness programs, collaborative research and education. www.supportivelivinginc.org | 781-937-3199



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