



Neighborhood Network of New York Receives \$1 Million Grant to Launch First of its Kind Community Living Services Program for Adults with Autism

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Innovative prototype to be launched in Westchester with the intent of replicating throughout NYS

New York, NY, **February 19th, 2015** – **Neighborhood Network of New York** (NNNY) has been awarded a \$1,083,233 grant by the New York State **Office For People With Developmental Disabilities** (OPWDD) to develop a first-of-a-kind, person-centered, community based service network for adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Spearheaded by New York Collaborates for Autism and Community Living Opportunities, NNNY uniquely combines individualized services, propriety remote support technology, and integrated community activities.

The grant from the OPWDD's New York State Balancing Incentive Program Transformation Fund, intended to transform non-institutional, long-term services for people with developmental disabilities, will enable NNNY to

- (1) launch a prototype neighborhood network in Westchester County, NY that serves Medicaid beneficiaries
- (2) develop protocols to replicate similar networks throughout New York State.

"Neighborhood Network of New York helps answer the nation's growing demand for affordable, individualized and dynamic support services for adults with special needs, while conserving financial resources," said **Ilene Lainer**, president, New York Collaborates for Autism (NYCA).

A departure from current residential models, Neighborhood Network of New York promotes a new living paradigm for adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) by creating neighborhood support networks that empower people to live productive and enriched lives with greater independence. Clients reside in the larger

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community, with or near professional families or neighbors who are trained to mentor them through daily life. Service professionals, clinicians and community members, aided by individualized remote technology, enhance this network, delivering on-demand, affordable support, as well as learning programs and community immersion opportunities.

“NNNY will connect people with special needs to the support services they require, when they need them, through the creation of a ‘smart’ neighborhood-within-a-neighborhood. Uniquely designed to use existing homes and apartments, NNNY leverages limited financial resources for what matters most, support and building community connections,” added Michael Strouse, PhD, president, Community Living Opportunities (CLO) and HomeLink Support Technologies.

NNNY is distinguished by its unique approach, which combines three innovative features:

- 1. Individualized Living Services for all Levels of Need** – Clients may live alone or with a roommate in apartment complexes where other clients and non-NNNY residents also live. Trained and certified professionals, who reside nearby with their own families, provide individualized mentoring and guidance 24/7. Those who require greater support may live with a professional family in a home setting.
- 2. Proprietary Remote Support Technology** – NNNY homes will be fitted with remote technology, developed by CLO, that offers tailored security and communications features, following custom privacy protocols. Cameras and sensors allow professionals to personally interact with clients from a monitoring center within the community to ensure their safety, provide real-time coaching, and trigger additional clinical intervention on an as needed (and therefore less costly, basis.)
- 3. The Communiversity** – Expanding on traditional day services, the Communiversity facilitates life-long learning with a curriculum that reinforces critical life-skills, job readiness and volunteer training, as well as communal and recreational activities that encourage social immersion and inclusion in the wider community.

“Current options for people with autism and other disabilities, such as group homes, in-home staffing, and traditional day services are expensive, relying upon 24-hour staff that may not always be needed. NNNY offers a viable and realistic, alternative living model, which promotes independence within a structured, caring, and inclusive community,” said Ilene Lainer of NYCA. “This program is timely and critical, especially with more than half a million teens with ASD expected to become adults in the next decade.”

“NNNY will use nationally-regarded, evidence-based, community service models, quality assurance systems, and remote technology supports developed by CLO over three decades,” added Michael Strouse of CLO. “We look forward to the opportunity to combine these features in the Northeast, to deliver unprecedented individual, person-centered outcomes for people with developmental disabilities.”

New York Collaborates for Autism (NYCA) is a non-profit organization that strategically designs and launches innovative, one-of-a-kind programs to improve the lives of people living with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Using an entrepreneurial approach, NYCA seeks to transform the current landscape of autism services and challenge the status quo by creating programs and opportunities that empower people with ASD to live fulfilling and joyful lives. NYCA collaborates with national thought leaders, partners with leading community-based organizations, provides tactical expertise and critical early-stage management, and raises vital seed money. NYCA sees the possibilities and creates the path. For a portfolio of programs, please visit <http://www.nyc4a.org>.

Community Living Opportunities (CLO) was founded 38 years ago to make a meaningful difference in the everyday lives of adults and children with significant developmental disabilities (DD) and the families who support them. CLO's HomeLink Support Technologies has been in constant development and refinement since 2000. Through a unique research and development partnership with the University of Kansas Department of Applied Behavioral Sciences, CLO has created nationally recognized service models for a range of DD populations across the lifespan (from 18 months through end of life) and is disseminating and adapting its current innovative service models for community living supports across the country. CLO has led or assisted with the closure of multiple institutions in California, Tennessee, and Kansas by creating best practice community services. www.clokan.org and www.homeLinksupport.com.