

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2018



Message from the Chief Executive Officer

2018 is off to an exciting start for Human First. In February, our Director of Service Coordination, Luisa Eusse-Roche, was honored with Schneps Communications' "Stars Under 40" Award, recognizing New York's top business professionals for their outstanding leadership and contributions to the community. Luisa is one of dozens of Human First employees who go above and beyond for our individuals, ensuring that they continue to thrive.

We remain committed to our staff for their hard work and dedication, which is why we are strong advocates of the #Fair2DirectCare campaign supporting an increase in wages for direct support professionals (DSPs). Human First was proud to lobby with the New York Alliance for Inclusion and Innovation on February 12th and 15th. On February 28th, we also stood united in the cause at a Lobby Day organized by the Coalition of Provider Agencies (COPA) in Albany, where hundreds of parents, DSPs and legislators gathered to share powerful stories demonstrating the need to accelerate funding for this critical part of our workforce.

The timing of the event could not be more appropriate – a fitting prelude to Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in March. This year's theme was "See Me For Me!" celebrating inclusion and the ability to look beyond an

individual's disability to see them as a person, rather than someone with a disability. Human First's remarkable individuals inspire us every day with their passion and determination to reach their full potential. From helping with chores in their homes to working at area businesses in our Supported Employment Program, they truly know no limits.

On behalf of everyone at our agency, I would like to express my deep gratitude to our incredible donors who help make our programs possible. On April 8th, we held our first annual bowl-a-thon at Jib Lanes in Queens. Thanks to the generosity and support of our sponsors, we surpassed our \$25,000 fundraising goal! Special thanks to our event sponsors who donated at the Perfect Game level: [Atlantic](#), [Tomorrow's Office](#) and [Trooper Foods](#).

Your continued support ensures that Human First continues to meet its mission of extraordinary care for the hundreds of individuals we serve!

Sincerely,

Cheryelle Cruickshank
Chief Executive Officer

SNEAK PEAK!
Our new
website is
live!

Human First Holds 1st Annual Bowl-A-Thon

On April 8th, we held our first annual bowl-a-thon at Jib Lanes in Queens. Thanks to the generosity and support of our sponsors, we surpassed our \$25,000 fundraising goal! Special thanks to our event sponsors below:

Perfect Game Sponsors: [Atlantic](#), [Tomorrow's Office](#) and [Trooper Foods](#). **Right Up Your Alley:** Approved Transportation, Vassalotti Associates Architects LLP, James E. Vassalotti III & Associates, Inc., [MHH Clinical Services](#). **Lane Sponsors:** All Boro, Inc., Ahtram Construction Services, Alliance Brokerage Corp, AshNick Services Inc., Beacon Therapy Services, PLLC, CBRE, College Meats, EI HAB Human Services, Enterprise Fleet Management, Happy Child Transportation, Human First Board of Directors, Janice E. Smith, Financial Advisor of Greater Long Island, Marketing Works, Milea Associates LLC, Pipes Plus of Long Island, and Robert Sanborn Development, LLC. **T-Shirt Sponsor:** Ira Einhorn.



Top Honors for Human First Director

Luisa Eusse-Roche M.S. Ed., Director of Service Coordination at Human First, was presented with Schneps Communications' "Stars Under 40" Award on February 13, 2018. She was among 48 business professionals honored for exemplary leadership and a stellar commitment to making a difference in the community. Hundreds of guests attended the lively awards ceremony, held at the Knockdown Center in Maspeth, New York.

Since joining Human First in November 2011 as a Medicaid Service Coordination Supervisor, Luisa has been instrumental in transforming the lives of countless New Yorkers with developmental disabilities. In 2014, she was named Director of Capacity Management for the agency's Early Intervention Program, before being promoted to Director of Service Coordination in 2016. Her extensive knowledge of healthcare systems, counseling and case management makes her a valuable asset to the agency as she works diligently to ensure that our individuals receive the resources they need to lead bright, fulfilling lives.

2. Congratulations, Luisa!

Cheryelle Cruickshank Appointed to Mental Hygiene Advisory Board

In January, Human First Chief Executive Officer Cheryelle Cruickshank was appointed to the Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Subcommittee of the Community Services Board of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

As a member of the subcommittee, also known as the Mental Hygiene Advisory Board, Ms. Cruickshank will serve through December 31, 2018, advising on issues impacting the City's programs and services for individuals with mental health challenges and developmental disabilities. The Board meets quarterly at the Gotham Center in Long Island City, New York.

A longtime leader in the mental health field, Ms. Cruickshank has been advocating for developmentally disabled individuals for nearly three decades. Before her appointment as Human First's CEO, she led a distinguished 20-year career at Services for the Underserved, developing vital programs such as Adult Day Services and Residential Services. She also served as Associate Executive Director at Unique People Services where she oversaw 22 programs for individuals with special needs. When she's not leading Human First, Ms. Cruickshank serves on the boards of the New York Alliance for Inclusion and Innovation, the InterAgency Council and the New York Association of Emerging Multicultural Providers.

Dorett Duncan-Browne, Little Neck Day Hab

Ms. Duncan-Browne has been working as a direct support professional (DSP) for Human First for more than two years. She has assisted the program by running multiple day habilitation meetings and is a strong advocate for Human First's individuals. Ms. Duncan-Browne highlights each of their unique qualities and strengths during meetings and encourages individuals to communicate their aspirations, likes and dislikes.

Ms. Duncan-Browne has also helped to formulate productive valued outcomes and treats everyday situations as an opportunity to teach individuals new things. She and her team work together to organize structured group activities that individuals enjoy, such as choosing different ethnic dishes to prepare in the program's cooking group. In addition, Ms. Duncan-Browne assists with transportation, including escorting individuals to the hospital. She remains by their side and never hesitates to go above and beyond. Our staff, individuals and their families are truly grateful for her compassionate care and service!



Human First's Day Hab Employee Spotlight, Keith Williams

Keith has been providing valuable services for Human First since March 5, 2012. In his work, Keith exhibits continued patience and compassion while caring for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. He travels from his home in the Bronx to Brooklyn Day Hab, also known as The Hope Center, sometimes beginning his day as early as 6:00 a.m. to provide 1:1 support for an individual on an approved bus route.

When addressing his peers and program participants, Keith always speaks in a calm, respectful manner. He is a valued team player and problem-solver, and is quick to tackle any challenges that arise.

Keith is an outstanding role model for Human First individuals and staff alike. Thank you, Keith, for your wonderful dedication and extraordinary service!



Jeffrey Howell, Astoria Day Hab

Since joining Human First on July 14, 2015, Jeffrey has demonstrated non-stop positivity and multiple talents in his role. He is an authorized driver with the agency and successfully obtained his AMAP Certification.

Jeffrey's sunny disposition has been instrumental in easing challenges that may occur. His positive outlook is often contagious and helps to create a nurturing, productive environment at the program.

Many thanks to Jeffrey for his excellent leadership, reliability and commitment!



3.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Human First Celebrates Black History Month

In February, staff and individuals commemorated Black History Month. The informative events provided an opportunity for Human First program participants to pay respect and learn more about people of color. Festivities including an original game of *Musical Jeopardy*, as well as interactive documentary screenings featuring notable men and women in history.



Human First Programs Spread the Love on Valentine's Day

Individuals expressed their heartfelt sentiments in lovely cards they created, while enjoying music, laughter and tasty food!



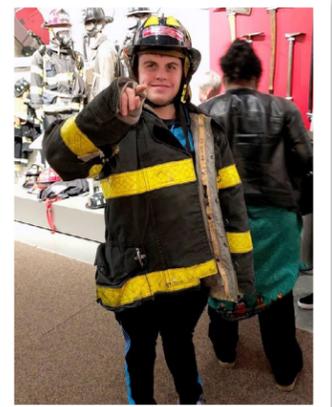
We Can Be Heroes

Day Hab participants recently visited the Nassau County Firefighters Museum and Education Center, where they were greeted by retired firefighters from Nassau County who led a fire safety and prevention workshop. The interactive presentation included real-life scenarios and helpful information on how to effectively respond to an emergency.



Afterward, individuals were taken on a hands-on tour of the museum. Among the fun activities they enjoyed were trying on protective gear, operating a fire hose and boarding fire department trucks!

Thank you to the kind volunteers at the Nassau County Firefighters Museum and Education Center – you truly made our individuals' day!



Community Outing Offers Fun and History

Human First's After School and Saturday Recreation Programs recently visited the American Museum of Natural History, where they enjoyed eye-catching exhibits and of course, dinosaurs!



Human First's Day Hab Employee Spotlight, Iesha Sanchez

Iesha Sanchez, Manhattan Day Hab. Iesha is a DSP with the Manhattan Day Hab. She goes above and beyond in working with the individuals. She is an excellent team player, readily helps her colleagues if they need assistance, and takes great care of her documentation.



Human First's Day Hab Employee Spotlight, Ahmed Ramadan

Ahmed Ramadan, Manhattan Day Hab. The Manhattan Day Hab recently relocated from 29th Street to Park Avenue. During the move, Ahmed exceeded expectations by assisting the Day Hab and MSC departments. For Ahmed, it's all about "getting the work done because it needs to be done." He ensures tasks are completed ahead of schedule and always offers workable solutions to any challenges that may occur.

Advocating Upstate for an Important Cause

In February, Human First staff visited Albany to meet with New York State Senator Leroy Comrie to discuss the #bFair2DirectCare campaign, and later in the month met with the New York Alliance for Innovation and Inclusion, and the Coalition of Provider Agencies (COPA), to lobby for a minimum wage increase for direct support professionals.

We also visited New York State Senator and Majority Leader, John Flanagan of District 2 on Long Island to further advocate for increased compensation for hard-working direct care staff.

Many thanks to Senator Comrie and Senator Flanagan for taking the time to meet with us, while acknowledging the crucial work that we do. Four of our residences are located in Senator Comrie's very own district, and we are opening a new residence in Senator Flanagan's district this year.



#bFair2DirectCare Unites Hundreds During Lobby Day



On February 28, 2018, Human First rallied with families, legislators and direct support professionals at a lobbying event in Albany organized by the Coalition of Provider Agencies (COPA). COPA represents 250+ New York State agencies working together to create more awareness about essential issues, while educating legislators about the impact of insufficient funding for life-changing programs and services.

During Lobby Day, attendees shared stories showcasing the importance of fair compensation for direct support professionals, considered to be one of the most valuable parts of our workforce for the compassionate care they provide to individuals with developmental disabilities. We stand united with our fellow agencies to raise awareness about this truly vital cause!

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

Congratulations to the following staff who recently celebrated their anniversary with Human First. Your dedication to our organization and the individuals we serve does not go unnoticed!

1 Year Anniversary

Charles Ampofo
Sonite Bajo
Jerry Jean Baptiste
Corey Belliard
Lia Berry
Antoine Brown
Maria Cardenas
Jennifer Williams-Cinnungham
Bernard Daniels
Laurel Dawkins
Divina Domingo
Elandra Eastman

Kadar Forbes
Gerald Gadsden
Sonia McLarty-Gayle
Denille Gerard
Morven Joseph
Jennifer Lorenzo
Raliet Madu
Misty Mabry
Dalia Marron
Rasheem McKinney
Natalie Medina
Jenny Chen Ng
Steve Odgie

Rozelle Otts
Melanie Quiroz
Pooran Rambaran
Katherine Mercedes Reye
Ian Smith
Horace Stanigar
Jennifel Tavarez
Danielle Tolbert
Mirlande Valere
Denzel Washington
Karen D Williams
Jacklyn Zevon

5 Year Anniversary

Dawn Adams
Otis Alves
Rachel Davis
Patricia Flowers

Sergei Kashin
Bashirat Lawal
Chen Nguy-Duong
Griselda Santana-Nunez

Evens Pimentel
Patricia Tajes
Brian Weaver
Nancy Zumba

10 Year Anniversary

Rajdai Basdeo
Marisol Estrada

Carlina Rojas
Lizbeth Zavala

Our New Website is Live!

In January, we started the New Year by launching a new website, filled with informative content about our programs and events.

Visit www.humanfirst.org and take a peek!





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www.humanfirst.org

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