

# From The Director's Desk

**IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE** that it has been one year since the COVID-19 pandemic began. I clearly remember the day we had to shut down the classes and programs being held inside our building at 19 Chestnut Street, and the worry and stress that surrounded all of the decisions that needed to be made to keep our clients safe, but still engaged. I hope it is clear from this newsletter that our staff has succeeded admirably at ensuring we live our mission of empowering individuals with disabilities to maximize their independence despite less-than-ideal circumstances. Healthy living classes, music therapy, cooking, and employment training programs are only a few of the 50+ classes offered each week. **Client** are not only showing their adaptability and resilience, but thriving in online classes in ways we could never have imagined. It has been a year of change and challenges, but also of many rewards, and we thank you for all of your support as we continue to navigate the ever-changing times.

In other good news, many PLUS Company clients and staff have been vaccinated against COVID-19 in accordance to the State of New Hampshire's phased rollout of the immunizations. To say we hope this marks a turning point in our fight against COVID is an

understatement. While we understand we are not at the end of the pandemic yet, we can now see a future where COVID might not be the first and last thing we think of every day.

In other news, The PLUS Company is in need of staff! If you are someone you know might be interested in a rewarding job that truly changes the lives of others for the better, please have them contact me.

And finally, our 30th Annual Wild Irish Breakfast will be held virtually on Wednesday, March 17 at 8:00 am. We have MANY amazing prizes for our raffle this year, including a \$3,000 American Express gift card and a \$750 Game Stop gift card, both donated by our friends at Citadel Storage. We also have a big screen TV, a golf outing, and a 2-night getaway to the Addison Choate Inn in Rockport, MA. Please go to [www.wildirishbreakfast](http://www.wildirishbreakfast) to purchase your raffle tickets! All proceeds go to support our Adult Education programming.

Thank you all for your support! 🙏

*-Kim Shottes*

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# PLUS Winter 2021 Perspectives

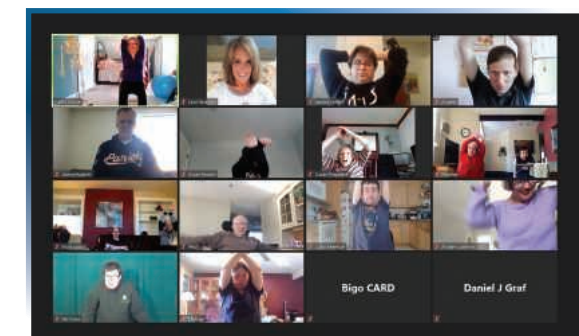
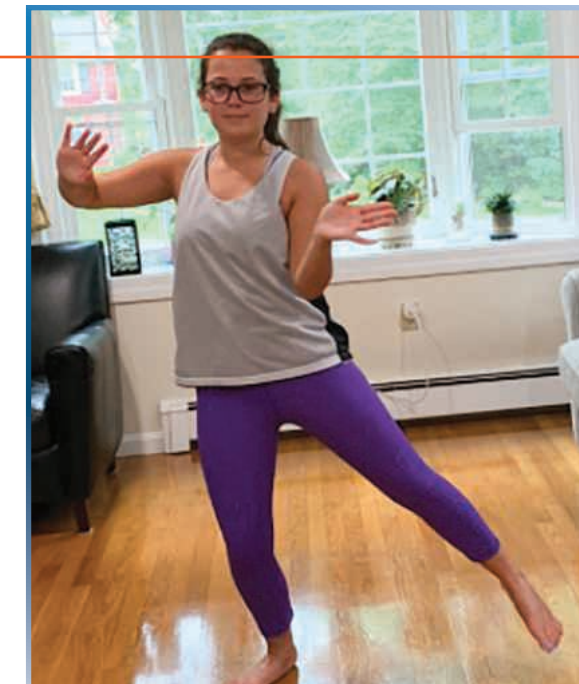
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## this issue

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## PLUS Company Clients Stay Fit And Healthy At Home

**PLUS COMPANY CLIENTS** are not letting the pandemic blues get in the way of their health and fitness routines! Thanks to a plethora of online classes in both New Hampshire and Massachusetts, clients are dancing, stretching, drumming, and taking Zumba, along with Healthy Living and stress management classes to stay physically and mentally fit. Clients are not sure which class is their favorite, but they sure do enjoy getting up and moving! "I really like Zumba with Jeannie," says Nick, "I like to dance and get my body moving!" Bryan is a big fan of yoga with teacher, Cathy Mook, saying, "It makes me physically and spiritually healthy," while Kristina prefers dance class with Nena. "She plays great music. She makes us happy and encourages us to do our best." Dance teacher, Nena, agrees saying that dancing is about more than having fun. It's about creativity, confidence, and staying engaged. "I always look forward to logging onto Zoom and seeing so many smiling faces ready to dance," she says. "Dance is more than a fun way to exercise. Seeing how all of the clients have grown in their creativity and confidence over the past several months is truly the best part." A huge thank you to all of our instructors for finding fun and creative ways to keep clients moving during these difficult times. You are all making a huge difference in the lives of our clients. 🙏



“Empower Individuals, Maximize Independence”

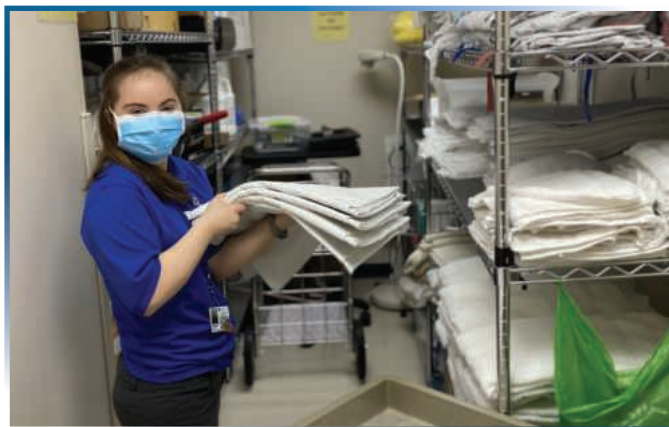
## DSP Spotlight: Vicky Mercado



**VICKY MERCADO** is a shining star working in our Community-Based Day Supports program in Massachusetts. According to her supervisors, Vicky **sparkle** with energy and brightens the day of everyone she comes into contact with. Coworkers and the clients she works with all benefit from her compassion, kindness, and optimism. Vicky also has a wonderful sense of humor and contagious laugh. Vicky goes above and beyond to make sure that our folks are comfortable, happy, and supported. Vicky is truly a valued member of The PLUS Company team. We are grateful for all that she does. Thank you, Vicky, for keeping our clients safe, well-cared for, and supported in the community. 🌟

## Project SEARCH Going Strong

**11 PROJECT SEARCH** interns are entering their second internship rotation and starting to figure out where they want to look for employment once they graduate from the program. Each intern will complete three internships in different departments within the hospital and work with PLUS Company job developers to determine where their interests and strengths lie. PLUS is incredibly grateful to St. Joseph Hospital for their dedication to this employment training program set entirely within their hospital during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thanks to St. Joe's, our interns and staff working in the hospital have been able to receive the COVID-19 vaccination, which has allowed them to keep working and learning in the hospital environment. Applications for the 2021-2022 program year are now available. The deadline to apply is March 31, and tours are available for interested applicants. Please contact Jamie Gregoire at 603- 882-3000 x.64402 or [jgregoire@pluscompany.org](mailto:jgregoire@pluscompany.org). 🌟



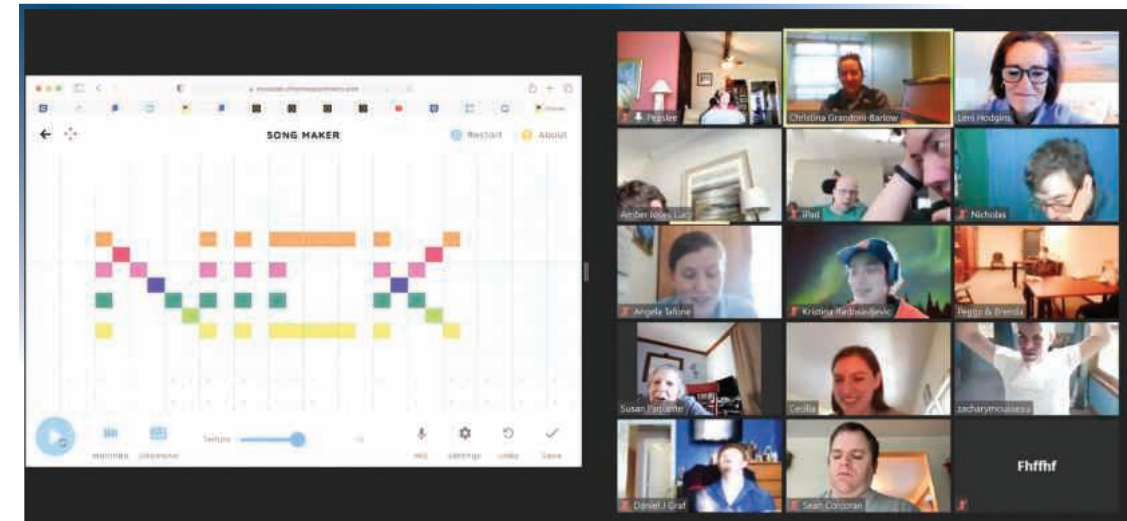
## Celebrating Helen

**IT IS WITH GREAT SADNESS** that we say goodbye to long-time client, Helen St Armand. Helen was a determined woman with a lot of sass and a zest for life. She was an avid reader and a huge Boston sports fan. Helen loved to know what was going on in the world and enjoyed watching the news in the evening and discussing the day's events. She also enjoyed taking yoga classes at PLUS and continued to take them via Zoom once the pandemic hit. For many years, Helen lived **at** in her family home. When she started to need more assistance in her daily life, PLUS helped Helen find a wonderful provider, Luna, who moved in with her. Helen and Luna were a wonderful match, and when Helen's home needed significant repairs, Luna and her family bought a home that would accommodate both the family and Helen. Helen lived happily with Luna and her family for many years, and will be greatly missed by all. We thank Helen for the many years of joy she brought to us **all and** celebrate her wonderful life. 🌟



## Music Therapy Eases Stress

**EASING STRESS**, developing new ways of communication, building confidence, and having fun are all part of The PLUS Company Music Therapy Class. Thanks to a generous grant from TD Bank, PLUS has been able to partner with the Manchester Community Music School to provide this class to our clients. Music Therapist, Christina Grandoni, has taught this class for several years and is very familiar with PLUS clients and their needs. The clients really enjoy taking part **of** this class each week and love that they can use music as an outlet for those emotions that may be hard to express. 🌟



## Cooking Up Fun

**OUT OF ALL THE CLASSES** PLUS Company is currently offering, cooking is by far the most popular! Weekly classes begin with the basics: washing hands, reading recipes, and making sure you have all the ingredients ready before beginning to cook. Clients learn to measure, use mixers and blenders, and how to crack eggs properly. Then the real fun begins – baking or using the stove top to make a delicious treat! Clients have learned to make everything from cookies to pizza dough to fresh tomato soup. Over the holidays, pumpkin pies, garlic green beans, and roasted glazed carrots were the popular dishes. Originally, classes were offered once a week, but there are now 3 cooking and baking classes each week due to high demand. Besides eating the dishes, students are most excited about sharing photos of their creations on The PLUS Facebook page. 🌟



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