



*Knickerbocker
Program Coordinators*



*Melissa B.
at Shoreham*



*Program Coordinators
at Bohemia*



Lakeland Program Coordinators



*Program Coordinators
at Westhampton Beach*

AHRC Suffolk's Program Coordinators work behind the scenes with our other programs to ensure that individuals are receiving the support and assurance they need. As Program Coordinators, they are responsible for attending annual and semi-annual meetings along with planning, coordinating, implementing and reviewing each individual's habilitation plan. They also prepare written reports and documentation as needed, and act as liaisons between individuals, their families, staff, and their Program Administrator. Program Coordinators are responsible for completing monthly reports for individuals and ensuring paperwork completed by staff meets HIPPA and OPWDD standards. They also ensure all the billing documents are correct. During the current pandemic, Program Coordinators have been going far beyond their usual responsibilities, making extra efforts to connect with individuals and keep them involved in program, whether it be returning in-person or participating virtually.

Beth L., a Program Coordinator for our Bohemia Day Habilitation program, spoke of how the pandemic has allowed her and her co-workers to connect on a different level with individuals and their families. Although the pandemic has changed everyone's everyday lives, being able to spend time with individuals, whether via phone calls or Zoom video calls has made their work more meaningful. The smiles and enthusiasm Program Coordinators receive from individuals when they hear from them speaks volumes. They have been there for families through it all - reaching out, finding out what their needs are or just answering any questions or concerns they may have. Lisa M., also a Program Coordinator at Bohemia, noted how all of the program coordinators work together as a great team. *"We support one another and the families/individuals that we provide services for. This is why we do what we do with pride, joy and love in our hearts. We provide connection, support and reassurance to the families of individuals during these uncertain times with this COVID 19 pandemic."*

Program Coordinators at our Lakeland Day Habilitation program are working very hard to keep the communication and consistency flowing between individuals and their families and residences. It can be quite a juggling act, sometimes requiring leaving multiple messages but it is all worthwhile when it results in calming someone's fear or frustration or just listening to and reassuring a parent or fellow staff member. Denise O. spoke on how all of the challenges Program Coordinators face are worth the rewards, *"My favorite part of our weekly phone calls is getting to talk to individuals. They are always excited to tell me what they are doing and always end the call with an "I miss you and when are we coming back to program?" As I wait for the day when we are back home at Lakeland, I know we have done what has needed to be done to keep things going. I am always grateful to be part of this agency."* Our Knickerbocker Day Hab also knows the importance of teamwork and building strong relationships. Sharon P., a Program Coordinator at Knickerbocker connects with Nicole, the Day Hab nurse at our Centereach ICF, weekly regarding individuals that attend day program at Knickerbocker and discusses any issues. During these meetings, she also is able to connect with individuals and take time to say hello and keep connected. The relationship Sharon and Nicole have and their ease with staying connected and being able to keep some familiarity in the lives of the individuals in the Knickerbocker Day Hab program, all while putting smiles on their faces, is essential and such an important part of the role they and all of the Program Coordinators play.

At Shoreham Day Hab, communication is key with Program Coordinators and Shoreham excels in this. They are able to really get to know the individuals and their families and have been able to form great and open lines of communication. Melissa B., who is a Program Coordinator, attends meetings for the individuals and reviews their plans in addition to submitting any reports needed. Melissa interacts with individuals' families frequently, for meetings or to address any issues or concerns they have. In addition to other responsibilities, Melissa is on the committee for MY Choice Virtual Day Hab and ensures that all Program Coordinators are trained and understand their role within this new program.

Program Coordinators at Westhampton Beach have been adjusting to the new way of life since the pandemic and helping individuals understand the changes they face including being unable to attend program and all of the adjustments they have to make to everyday life. One crucial link they have is telephone conversations with individuals. Mary Jones, a Program Coordinator at Westhampton Beach, reflected fondly on some of the conversations she has had, *"We talked about their life dreams, funny stories that had taken place as they were growing up, what it was like in school prior to coming to program, their family life and how much they missed program and seeing their friends. It has been a joy to have had the opportunity to speak with them on a more intimate level and know that each phone call placed to them made a difference in their life!"*

We appreciate all of our Program Coordinators who are going the extra mile and making such an amazing team effort to ensure the happiness and health of all of the individuals we provide supports for.