



(Dustin)

## Raise a Glass to Origlio Beverage

Prospectus Berco would like to raise a glass to Origlio Beverage for crafting an opportunity for Dustin to begin a new career as a warehouse employee. The new position challenged Dustin in many ways. He had to learn new skills, including how to navigate the immense storage area that houses the many brands of beverages, in addition to operating the warehouse equipment, and following the necessary safety protocols. Working closely with his supervisor and job coach, Afiyo Awouya, Dustin learned to use a digital map to navigate the warehouse. He embraced hands-on training and mastered the

necessary skills to be an integral member of the team. But none of this would have been possible without Origlio Beverage and its commitment to provide opportunities for people with disabilities gainful employment.

Earlier this year Dustin and his family expressed their gratitude to Prospectus Berco and the Employment Services program. Their testimonial encapsulates the necessary role of the job coach in the whole employment process. Read Dustin's letter on page 8.

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### Executive Director's Message



*"Two parents, who through their ongoing commitment to the work we do, have ensured the financial security of this organization going forward."* **Jody Wagner**

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Corporate Administrator/Assistant to CEO

**Jessica Penchard**  
Development & Public Relations Director



## Executive Director's Message Paving the Way for Future Generations

Prospectus Berco has been the beneficiary of many acts of kindness and generosity over our 47 years of operation. A significant milestone in our evolution as a service provider was the establishment of a Prospectus Berco Endowment Fund in 2007. An endowment fund assures the long-term financial health of a nonprofit organization. Additionally, a nonprofit with an endowment sends the message to donors that the organization will be fulfilling its mission for decades to come.

We were able to achieve this hallmark of financial stability thanks to a generous initial donation designated for the establishment of an endowment fund from Fred Wolf, Sr. and his wife Mary Jane. Throughout their lives, Fred and Mary Jane Wolf actively strove to make this world a better place by giving and doing for others—through their church, in their neighborhood, and as valued members of the Prospectus Berco family. These loving parents of a gentleman who resided in a Prospectus Berco community home and participated in our day program wanted to do something meaningful for the organization which supported their son in living a life of possibilities. With its modest beginnings of \$25,000, the Prospectus Berco Endowment Fund was established and has grown steadily through bequests and donations, including many from the Wolfs over the past 17 years.

Last year after the sad and untimely passing of Fred, who was predeceased by his wife Mary Jane, Prospectus Berco was the beneficiary of a significant bequest from his estate bringing Prospectus Berco's Endowment Fund to a total of 1.3 million dollars. Two parents, who through their ongoing commitment to the work we do, have ensured the financial security of this organization going forward. What a truly inspirational legacy for them and their son and one for which Prospectus Berco will forever be grateful. ■



## Welcome New Board Members

Prospectus Berco is thrilled to announce the appointment of three distinguished professionals to its Board of Directors. Their expertise and vision will undoubtedly enrich our organization's leadership and strategic direction. Join us in welcoming Beverly Kline-Cummings, Heather Hillmann, and Cory Porrino, CPA, to our esteemed Board of Directors. With their extensive experience in each respective profession, we are certain their collective expertise will play a pivotal role in guiding our organization to new heights of success.

**Beverly Kline-Cummings** began her career working at Prospectus Berco's parent organization after having earned a BS degree in Special Education from Millersville University. She distinguished herself by holding a variety of leadership positions in day services, supportive services, and residential services. She left Prospectus Berco in 1995 to join her family business, Kline Process Systems, an engineering technology company recognized nationally for their innovative process control solutions. She currently holds the position of Human Resources Manager for Kline Process Systems. Beverly's community board and volunteer work includes serving on the Wyomissing Hills Citizen Social Committee, serving as Treasurer for the Wyomissing Swimming Association, and with the Berks

County Community Foundation upon the closure of her church, St. John's, to distribute monies from the church. She resides in Wyomissing Hills with her husband Peter, also a valued former Prospectus Berco professional, and their adored dog, Winston.

**Heather Hillmann** has been the Human Resources Manager at Unique Snacks since March of 2020. She hails from Allentown and graduated from Emmaus High School in 1995. She graduated magna cum laude in 1999 from West Chester University, majoring in Kinesiology. During college Heather was on both the track and rugby teams, as well as being an RA and president of two honors fraternities. She taught adaptive aquatics to individuals with mental and physical disabilities. For ten years Heather taught Health and Physical Education at Collegium Charter School in West Chester. During that time, she earned her master's in educational leadership with a specialization in Special Education. While teaching, Heather also played women's tackle football for two years for the Philadelphia Liberty Belles and Delaware Griffens.

Heather joined Arkema as an HR Assistant in October of 2017 and was promoted to Senior HR Associate a year later. Working for a global company gave her the experience to learn all facets of Human Resources

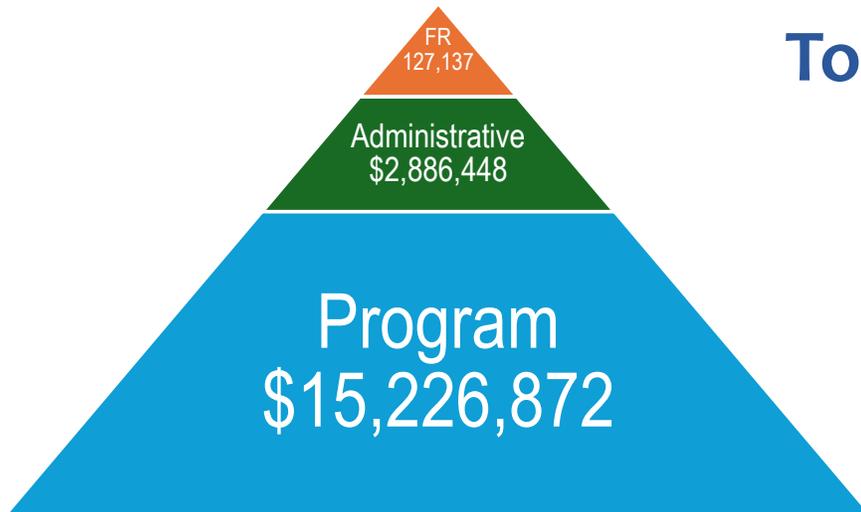
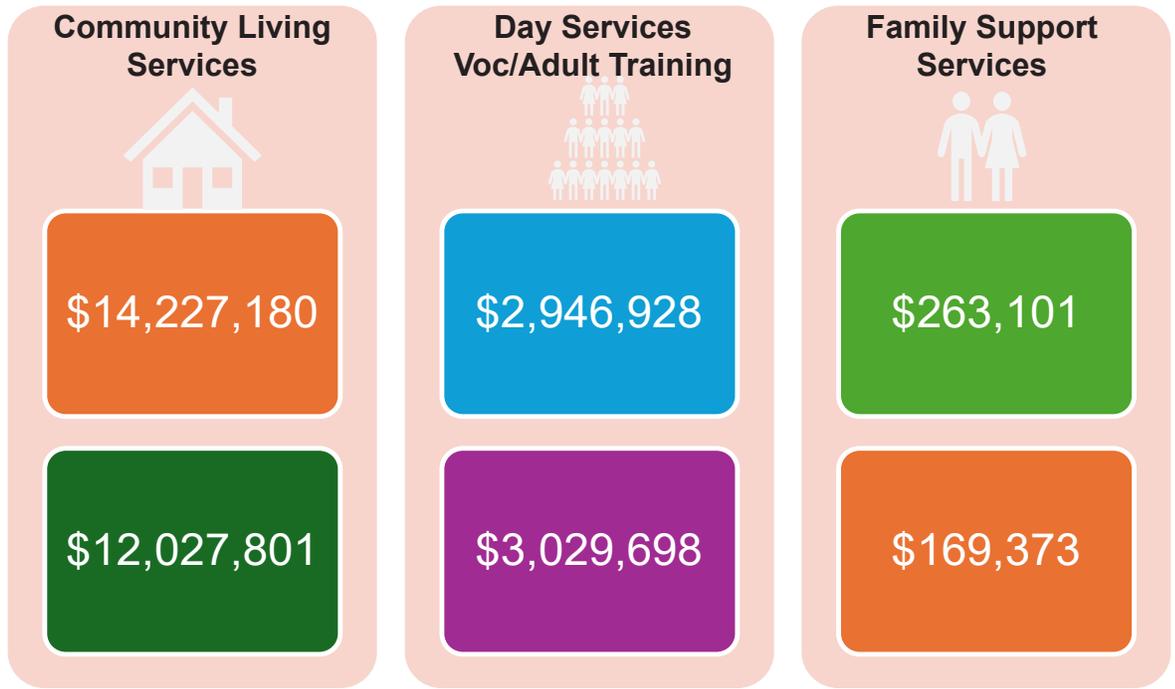
but didn't allow her to have the personal interaction that provided her with professional happiness. Joining Unique Snacks has given her the ability to use all the skills she learned during her career, as well as support a rapidly growing local brand. She also feels pride when able to partner with organizations like Prospectus Berco to give those less able a job opportunity.

**Cory Porrino, CPA**, has been affiliated with Prospectus Berco for many years, having served as a fiscal consultant since 2016 when we were in transition between CFOs. Cory is a managing member of Porrino CPA, LLC, with more than 15 years of accounting experience. His background as a CPA working with small businesses while providing advisory and consulting services gives him valuable experience to serve and contribute to the Prospectus Berco Board of Directors.

Cory resides in Orwigsburg with his wife and five children. He is a dedicated servant of the community, assisting many nonprofit boards in various leadership roles.

As we embark on this exciting new chapter, we look forward to the invaluable contributions of our new board members and the positive impact they will have on our future endeavors. ■

# FY 2022-2023 Program Funding



## Total Expenses

**83%**  
of every dollar  
goes to programming

## Individuals Served



*Note: Census numbers reflect the number of individuals served in each program; some individuals receive multiple services through Prospectus Berco. A complete copy of our 990 is available on our website.*

# FY 2023-2024 Funding Sources - \$18,789,337

86%  
Human Services  
\$16,245,565

5%  
Fundraising Events, Contributions, Grants  
\$886,006

3%  
Room & Board  
\$656,355

2%  
Government Grants  
\$466,122

2%  
Service Access Management  
\$390,416

2%  
1% - Work Contracts / \$100,733  
.5% - OVR / \$22,244  
.5% - Other / 21,896

## Contributions

- Annual Fund Appeal

\$58,629



- Annual Golf Tournament

\$71,641



- Restricted Grants

\$124,642



- Helping Hand Fund

\$470



- Laura Isenburg Education & Enrichment Fund

\$3,228



- Endowment Fund

\$550,314



# Build Back Better

The post-pandemic landscape presents numerous challenges for organizations like Prospectus Berco, however, amidst the challenges lie opportunities for growth, innovation, and resilience.

One of the most critical challenges we face is addressing staffing shortages, a longstanding issue exacerbated by the pandemic. Direct care worker shortages were already a concern pre-pandemic, and the prolonged impact of the pandemic led to extensive overtime hours for many workers, resulting in fatigue and burnout, prompting some to leave the field. To tackle this challenge, Prospectus Berco implemented measures, such as gradually reducing the number of individuals served in Community Living Homes by not filling vacancies, making staffing more manageable. This approach mirrored trends seen statewide, with 33% of service providers in Pennsylvania consolidating or closing services since 2020, despite an increasing demand for services as evidenced by the 6,000 adults with disabilities still awaiting services in the state.

Hiring and retaining direct care workers, whose critical roles come with inadequate compensation causing many to seek higher paying opportunities outside the field, remains the most pressing concern. Insufficient training for entry-level positions and limited avenues for career growth further impede employee retention efforts.

## Goal #1 Employee Recruitment and Retention



In 2024 Prospectus Berco began the implementation of several initiatives to improve employee recruitment and retention.

**Prospectus Berco wants to make a clear statement to employees that working for Prospectus Berco is a good career choice.**



### **Increase Compensation**

We increased the starting wage from \$14 per hour for new hires to \$15 - \$16.50 per hour depending on experience for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs). At the same time, we gave existing staff a \$1 per hour increase in compensation. We are exploring ways to improve compensation for direct care workers through shift differentials and awarding pay increases for specialized skills.



### **Flexibility**

We introduced a new position, Schedule Coordinator, to collaborate with Directors on staffing needs. We're also planning to add "floating" DSP positions to support different service areas by offering split shifts. Our goal is to create more appealing work schedules for better work-life balance, while ensuring high-quality services through adequate coverage.



### **Credentialing**

We're launching Pathways to Care, a program to certify frontline managers (FLMs) and DSPs in disability services, aiming for 100% credentialing in three years for all direct care workers. This initiative enhances care quality, boosts career prospects and earnings by advancing the skills and training of employees into specialized areas in the healthcare industry. This initiative will foster consistency and amplify our values across all service areas. Additionally, two employees, supported by a grant from the Office of Developmental Programs, are joining our Medical Support Team as Licensed Practical Nurses in 2024.

It is our intention that by implementing these initiatives we can ensure high-quality care for our participants, improve workforce retention, and promote professional growth throughout the corporation. We want to make a clear statement to employees that working for Prospectus Berco is a good career choice.

## Goal #2 Rebuilding Capacity

Rebuilding capacity is a lot more than just recovering from the pandemic; it's about creating a more robust, equitable, and sustainable future for individuals to grow and thrive. It requires collaboration, innovation, and a shared commitment to building back a better and stronger, more viable Prospectus Berco. In many ways Prospectus Berco has been gifted with the opportunity to evaluate how we are providing services and determining if there are more innovative ways that we can address the needs of individuals.



### Employment Services

During the pandemic we expanded Vocational Services to include Supported Competitive Integrated Employment Services. As a result, we now partner with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to offer a WEXA (Work Experience for Adults) program, which is geared toward helping individuals obtain real work experience to enhance employability. Businesses can enter into an agreement with Prospectus Berco while OVR pays the individual to work for their company. We provide on-the-job training, and assume all liability for the individual to work at their business.



### Vocational Services

We are actively exploring various options for production and assembly work as part of our Vocational program is directed at employing people with disabilities. By collaborating with businesses in the community, we aim to create meaningful opportunities that align with the skills and capabilities of individuals in our program. Our focus is on developing partnerships that not only provide employment but also offer training, support, and a conducive work environment to foster growth and success for all participants.



### Adult Training Services

Capacity in Adult Training continues to increase as more individuals are resuming services. Bringing people back together has led to greater social interactions and opportunities to volunteer, share interests, and enrich people's lives. We continue to look for ways to offer meaningful learning experiences for individuals to ignite their interests, re-engage with their peers, and explore their community.



### Family Support Services

We would like to increase our capacity to serve more individuals through 1:1 Family Support Services, such as Companion, Habilitation, and Respite by recruiting part-time DSPs to work flexible schedules to help us address the growing demand for these services.



### Community Living Services

Affordable housing and community living options for adults with disabilities remains a priority. Prospectus Berco intends to expand Life Sharing Services by recruiting more independent contractors as Life Sharing providers. Life Sharing providers may be relatives of the adult or may be a person who wishes to enhance the quality of life of another by opening their home to an adult with a disability. We are also actively looking to purchase additional ranch homes in Berks County to address the housing needs of adults with disabilities. If anyone is interested in becoming a Life Sharing Provider, or selling/donating a home, contact Jody Wagner, CEO at 610-372-4637, ext. 110.

Our capacity to build back better relies on our ability to recruit and retain a caring and dedicated workforce. It is essential that we initiate ways to empower direct care workers to succeed in their roles as professionals to draw upon a sustainable workforce to meet the critical needs of adults with disabilities living and working in our community. ■



# The Difference a Job Coach Can Make

*“There were times when I became frustrated and felt like giving up, but you helped me to persevere and keep a positive attitude.”*

*Dustin Peters*

*Dear Afiyo and Prospectus Berco,*

*My family and I wanted to take this opportunity to let you know how thankful we are for all your help as my job coach. You were very supportive during the entire job search process which went on once a week for several months. There were times when we became frustrated and felt like giving up, but you helped us to persevere and keep a positive attitude. The resume you created for me was a huge help in applying for different jobs and in finally securing the job I have now.*



*When I think about it, you were with me every step of the way. You accompanied me to my interview which included a tour of the warehouse I'd be working in. You were with me on my first day of work for job orientation and training. For the first two weeks at least, you would spend several hours a day with me at my job. You offered tips and suggestions to help me be successful with the duties of my position. You also remained in direct contact with my warehouse manager each and every time there was an issue regarding my job performance or simply a question that needed an answer.*

*After the initial two weeks, you or another staff member continued to pop in at my job one or two days a week in an effort to make sure things were going smoothly for me and to assist in any way if needed. You also continued to keep my Mom up to date with my progress on a weekly basis. You were always a phone call away to help resolve any problems I was having.*

*I really appreciate all you did for me and thoroughly enjoyed working with you to get where I am today. I am very happy with my job at Origlio Beverage. I really enjoy what I do, I make good money, and the guys I work with are nice and helpful. My self-esteem has definitely improved as well.*

*I encourage others to work with Prospectus Berco if they have the opportunity and highly recommend you as an exceptional job coach. You go out on a limb to help your clients be successful.*

*Much Gratitude,  
Dustin Peters & Family*

If your business is interested in partnering with us  
contact Ginnie Haggerty, Employment Services Director,  
at [ghaggerty@prospectusberco.org](mailto:ghaggerty@prospectusberco.org). ■

# Alvernia University OT Students Level Up



“Alvernia’s Occupational Therapy Program had the pleasure of connecting with Prospectus Berco to provide Level I fieldwork experiences in the Adult Training, Vocational, and Residential programs. A Level I fieldwork placement is intended to provide a comprehensive experience in many different areas

of occupational therapy practice, regardless of whether an OT is on site or not, and Prospectus Berco went above and beyond to ensure this happened. Not only did the students have the ability to connect with individuals on a personal level but learned that OT is beneficial in any location as a means to help someone achieve something that is meaningful to them. I look forward to the continued partnership with Alvernia’s OT students and Berco!” Amanda Stilianos, MOT, OTR/L, CDP Occupational Therapy Department Academic Fieldwork Coordinator.

## Meet Mike Conrad

Mike Conrad, one of the OT students in the class wasn’t sure what to expect when he elected to work with Prospectus Berco. His experience has been working with children. After completing graduate school, Mike would like to work in a pediatric hospital or work with special needs children from birth to age five providing early intervention services. However, he found the experience refreshing to work with adults. “It has been such a great experience, I wish I could have done it longer,” Mike said.

He took his time learning about each person’s interests and skill level, which bloomed into a relationship of trust for him to work more closely with the participants. Mike learned how to motivate each participant based on their abilities and interests. He worked with Joe who is visually impaired and found that promoting tactile sensory functions, like manipulating a fidget board, a good method to motivate Joe to participate in activities. While Wendy enjoyed jigsaw puzzles, he helped her develop a strategy to complete the puzzle by working on the outside edges first and then working to the middle. And Felix enjoyed writing lists, so Mike would pick a subject like doughnuts and take turns writing down their favorite flavors of doughnuts. It was apparent that Mike had established an individual relationship with each participant in the room.

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*“It gives them a sense of confidence and builds their self-esteem.”*

Mike Conrad, Alvernia University Graduate Student

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The community excursions that staff go on with participants was another eye-opening experience for Mike. He accompanied a Direct Support Professional (DSP) and participants to the Rittenhouse Nursing Home where participants volunteer several times a week to clean and set tables between meals. Mike coached Terry, a program participant, on his volunteer assignment and provided 1:1 support by helping him process the necessary steps for each task. Initially, Terry needed a lot of prompting to complete one task before moving on to the next one, but after several weeks of volunteering, Terry was able to work independently with minimal prompting. Mike found it inspiring to see how much individuals want to be successful and have meaningful activities. “It gives them a sense of confidence and builds their self-esteem,” he said.

Mike is amazed by the multitude of services that Prospectus Berco provides for individuals, not only through Adult Training Services, but also through its Community Living Homes and Employment Services. He was especially impressed by the Vocational program and how happy everyone is to provide meaningful work and to have a purpose. “The public needs to be more educated about what we do here (at Prospectus Berco). It is so important,” he said. ■



# Bowling



Harold and Kelly strike it big at the bowling alley.



Participants kick up their heels for a St. Patrick's Day Dance. Pictured below are Stacey and Amber, Larry and Brian, and check out Beth Ann striking a pose for the camera.



# Dancing



# Motoring

Barry, Michael, and Thaddeus from Adult Training spent a day visiting the Classic Auto Mall.

# Hosting

Jody Wagner, CEO, welcomed the Leadership Berks Class on March 19th as Prospectus Berco had the esteemed privilege to host the class at its corporate facility. It was an eventful day for the class, and we especially enjoyed the opportunity to give students a tour of our programs.



# Smiling

Creating good vibes, Marie's pet therapy dog Karma visited with participants, sharing furry hugs and smiles.



Pictured above is Lori and right Mark enjoys a visit with Karma.



Left Alisha meets Karma and below Cody makes a new friend.



# Dining

Pictured left to right is Sandy Stoudt, DSP; Glenn; Joann; and Sabrina Aponte, DSP.



Friends Joan and Eloise attended Dutch Apple Dinner Theatre to enjoy the Olivia Newton-John Tribute.



# Drumming

Todd and Debbie chime in with their tambourines during a drum circle.



# Charming

Adult Training hosted a class on jewelry making for participants to create something beautiful for themselves or maybe for that special someone. Pictured above are Alan; Jahdareya Phillips, DSP; and John. To the left, Ernesto and Melissa with Supervisor Marines Perez-Ofarril, dive into the rhythmic groove of a community drum circle, creating positive vibes of their own for all to enjoy.





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**30TH ANNUAL  
 Golf  
 TOURNAMENT**  
 PROSPECTUS BERCO

**MONDAY, JULY 29, 2024**  
**MOSELEM SPRINGS GOLF CLUB**

**JOIN OUR LEAD SUPPORTING SPONSORS:**



**PROSPECTUS BERCO**  
**Open House**  
 Looking for Services Beyond High School?  
 Looking for Additional Services?

**Date:** May 9th

**Time:** 5p.m.  
 Presentation, Tours, and Refreshments

**Who:** Individuals with ID/DD/Autism  
 Parents, Family Members

**Where:** Prospectus Berco  
 1800 Kutztown Road  
 Reading, PA 19604

*Help us serve you, complete our Service Survey*

RSVP by May 2nd to Laura Murga at [lmurga@prospectusberco.org](mailto:lmurga@prospectusberco.org)  
 610-372-4637, 105