INSPIRED BY ACTS OF KINDNESS:

POTOMAC COMMUNITY RESOURCES, INC.

ARTICLE MELISSA LAUREN | PHOTOGRAPHY PROVIDED

"WHEREVER THERE IS A HUMAN BEING, THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A KINDNESS."

- Lucius Annaeus Seneca

Acts of kindness are always meaningful and inspiring. Acts of kindness are impactful for both the giver and the receiver. Acts of kindness create community. One such organization that embraces this philosophy is Potomac Community Resources, Inc. (PCR). PCR promotes the full inclusion into community life of teens and adults with developmental differences by providing over 35 therapeutic, recreational, social, educational, and respite care programs.

Potomac Community Resources' dynamic, innovative programs are designed to encourage its members' personal growth, friendships, and healthy lifestyles, and to provide support to their family members and caregivers. Programs include music, fitness and movement, respite care for individuals with significant and moderate care needs, discussion groups for men and women, communication skills, basketball, art, a social club, photography, information sessions for parents of transitioning youth, and many special events throughout the year. PCR was started in 1994 by Joan and Jim Sullivan of Potomac and Monsignor John Enzler then Pastor of Our Lady of Mercy Church and other families that included loved ones with developmental differences.

Stephen F. Riley is the Executive Director of Potomac Community Resources, co-founder of the 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and parent of a PCR member. He talks about how the organization began and their mission, "The group came together and consisted of families who were living the life with loved ones who had developmental differences. Our experience living with our family members and seeing firsthand their immediate needs is what guided us through our journey. Our aim was to create new opportunities focusing on teens and adults. Our services act to supplement what the schools previously provided for those students who have graduated. PCR fills the gaps not provided by existing resources. We are in continuous conversation with members inquiring about their needs. Our staff and volunteers work to develop programs tailor-made to meet the needs and preferences of PCR members."

PCR has also assembled a vast list of resources helping in the areas of adaptive equipment, adult service providers, advocacy, arts, assistive technology, aquatics, camps, day programs, education, employment and vocational services, equine therapy, funding, housing and residential services, legal support, transportation services, and more. Programs at Potomac Community Resources take place at various locations in Montgomery County; volunteers and members are from various locations throughout the metropolitan area. Their programs are facilitated by professionals and staffed by experienced and trained staff. Volunteer opportunities are available. Volunteer Lizzy Demaree talks about how her experience with the organization has been meaningful and rewarding, "When you give love, you receive love, that's PCR. Our differences are small and when we are together, there is no greater joy." Staff member Kimberly Beer is grateful to "work with wonderful people, both staff and members alike, who are trying to just help each other live better. PCR offers high-quality programs, and meaningful recreational and social opportunities. They invest so much in their staff that I feel PCR should serve as a model for other nonprofits." Adults and teens ages 15 and older are welcome to volunteer.

Potomac Community Resources not only helps its own community but has grown outside of their backyard to assist other groups by enabling them to create new programs for persons with developmental differences. This work has resulted in five additional organizations in the following areas: Darnestown/ Gaithersburg, Brookland in Northeast, D.C. , St. Mary's, Calvert, and Charles County in Southern Maryland, Prince George's County, and Comunidad de Recursos Hispanos, serving those with developmental disabilities whose first language is Spanish.

For those who are unable to donate their time but would like to support this worthy nonprofit, donations to Potomac Community Resources make a real difference in the lives of individuals with developmental differences and their families. In fact, 86% of every dollar that is donated goes directly to their programs. PCR is recognized by the Catalogue for Philanthropy as a nonprofit "among the best small charities in the Greater Washington region," validating their commitment to excellence, cost-effectiveness and impact. PCR hosts several fun fundraising events each year. Information about their fundraisers can be found on their Facebook page. PCR Co-founder and President Jim Sullivan, a long-time Potomac resident who passed away in September 2018, was passionate about including individuals with developmental differences in community life, about promoting their rights, and about creating opportunities and programs that serve their needs and help their families. Jim devoted countless hours to PCR and supporting the members and mission through leadership, advocacy, generosity, and fundraising. The Jim Sullivan Memorial Fund honors his dedicated leadership and will ensure that the work about which he cared so deeply will continue. To learn more about volunteer opportunities or to make a donation, visit **Pcr-inc.org.**