

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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Transitional Services of New York for Long Island, Inc.

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***PROVIDING HOUSING AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR  
OVER 40 YEARS***

TSLI would like to thank our dedicated staff and Board of Directors who serve as the backbone of the organization and help to make a difference in the lives of our residents.



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Member, Rebecca joined the Board in 2022

**Burton Weston, Esq.**  
Member, Burton joined the Board in 2023



Rebecca Bonanno

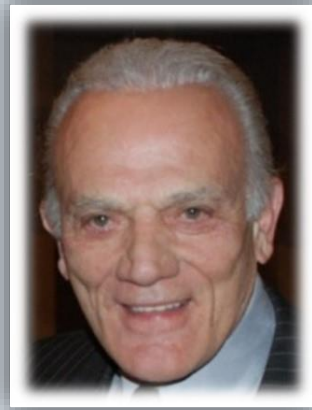


Burton Weston

### **Honorary Chairpersons**

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(1916-2002)        (1942-2012)

# EXECUTIVE UPDATE



**Bruno J. LaSpina, Chief Executive Officer**

As we usher in the new year, Transitional Services of New York for Long Island, Inc. (TSLI) reflects on the lives that have been impacted by the services we provide. For the past 47 years TSLI has continued to provide safe and stable housing, support services, valuable vocational training and employment to those diagnosed with a Serious and Persistent Mental Illness. In 2023, we are proud to say that TSLI assisted over 159 individuals and families to increase their independence and improve their life skills.

In 2023, now more than ever, the residents entering all of our programs present with a multitude of challenges, including co-occurring disorders related to substance abuse and medical issues.

Through the efforts of both staff and residents working together, over 63% of all discharges from the Agency were to a more independent setting.

In addition, over 10% of the residents were gainfully employed and all the residents in our programs secured necessary clinical linkages. Simultaneously, due to the lack of outside available resources to address these issues, TSLI staff worked tirelessly to provide the most optimal care to our residents.

In 2023 the New York State (NYS) Legislature and our Governor placed a growing focus on mental health services. As a result, there were several amendments to our NYS budget which allowed for us to provide a 4% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) to all staff as well as several other collateral Workforce Incentives. In addition, the New York State Office of Mental Health (NYSOMH), continued the Bonus Program, for current staff retention and new hires. These incentives have had a profoundly positive impact on the retention of current staff and enable us to maintain a highly qualified and capable workforce. In 2024, the Governor is aware of the need for New York to continue to work towards creating an increased stable and qualified workforce to care for individuals experiencing significant mental health challenges.

This year, we continued to collaborate with the Office of Mental Health and were able to secure additional Capital funding in the amount of over \$4,500,000 for the total rehabilitation of two of our Supervised Programs located in Central Islip and Holtsville. These renovations will positively upgrade the living environment for the 20 residents who reside there, and we look forward to its commencement in 2024.

On behalf of our Board of Directors and Administration we invite you to read on about our many accomplishments in 2023.

# SHARING OUR WHY...

*Transitional Services of New York for Long Island, Inc. (TSLI) is a 501(c)(3) human service agency, which provides housing and support services to mentally ill adults. TSLI also provides permanent housing and support services to mentally ill homeless individuals and families. Our goal is to enable participants to live in the community at the highest level of independence possible. TSLI provides job training and personal skill development to mentally ill persons pursuing reintegration into the competitive workforce. Our objective is to develop participant's work skills and increase marketability, which will result in an increased level of self-sufficiency.*

***Our Supervised Living Program at Holtsville I and Apartment Program at Holtsville II staff share their experiences and insights working for TSLI.***



Gabriella Gascon, Program Supervisor;  
Dakota Dalto, Pamela McDonnell, Case Managers

I have been with TSLI for a little over four years. I didn't know the mental health field was the path I wanted to go down until working with TSLI. Reflecting on the past year, I am grateful for the progress that TSLI has made as a team. Together we have overcome losses, embraced change, and have achieved remarkable milestones. I feel so blessed to work with such an amazing team and residents. Working with the residents and seeing the progress they continue to make is a very rewarding part of this job as well as the relationships formed with each individual resident; helping to provide the support needed to help each resident to achieve their goal of moving to more independent living.

*- Gabriella Gascon/Program Supervisor*

Helping others in any capacity is the greatest gift we can give (to ourselves as well). Coming into work each day to assist our residents in realizing their potential, and being part of their momentum towards those achievements is both inspiring and fulfilling. I am and continue to be grateful for the graces of each experience.

*- Susan Cusmano/Night Counselor*

As we come to the end of another successful year, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on the incredible work we have accomplished together. It has been a privilege to work alongside an incredible team with such dedication, compassion, and resilience. Throughout the year, we have faced numerous challenges, but we have always risen above them with determination and a shared commitment to our residents. Our team's unwavering support and tireless efforts have made a significant impact on the lives of those we serve, providing them with the resources, guidance, and support they need to thrive. As we move forward into the next year, I am confident that we will make a profound impact on the lives of those we serve.

*- Pamela McDonnell/Case Manager*

When I graduated with my Bachelor's Degree in Psychology, everyone always asked me what I wanted to do with it. I knew that I wanted to make a lasting difference in the lives of those who needed it most, and working at TSLI has allowed me to do just that. It's a privilege to work with each resident and guide them down a path of enhanced independence and success. As I look toward the future, I hope to continue growing upon the dedication and passion of my skill set and contribute to the collective achievements of the Agency and individuals we serve.

*- Dakota Dalto/Case Manager*

## 2023 Management Team and Staff Surveys

We are proud to share the positive results of the 2023 Staff and Management Team surveys.

The surveys were completed anonymously, a Task Force reviewed the results, and a final report was routed to staff.

Overwhelmingly portrayed was the satisfaction all staff felt about their work environment, supervisors and the Administrative staff.

Staff expressed the reasons they liked working for TSLI/HHB which included working alongside their co-workers and supervisors as well as the fact there is a clear sense of teamwork, even in the face of staff shortages.

Despite the ongoing challenges the supervisors and managers face on a day-to-day basis, morale is ranked high, and all respondents reported that TSLI/HHB is a good organization to work for. Respondents noted their positive relations both with their own staff and supervisors, as well as being satisfied in their jobs. The Agency's positive relationship with the community and external service providers was noted.

We are sharing this good news at the end of yet another challenging year. We hope that you feel as proud as we do to be associated with TSLI/HHB.

Once again, we want to thank our Board members for the loyalty and trust that you place in us.



### 2023 Survey Comments

*"I had no experience coming into this field. I have learned so much from the hands-on experience."*

*"I would like the opportunity to be cross-trained on "other" areas of the Agency."*

*100% of the staff report: "My supervisor offers support and assistance when needed."*

*"My supervisor is awesome and goes above and beyond!"*

*"It is rewarding to see the progress made by the residents to improve their overall well being."*

### Increased funding for Staff Retention and Recruitment

In December 2021, the Office of Mental Health (OMH) issued targeted funding for the recruitment and retention of experienced and dedicated employees. Since that time, TSLI has actively used this funding to ensure recruitment and staffing at our programs is consistently evaluated and promoted.

As part of the 2022 to 2023 New York State Budget, a Health Care Worker Bonus (HWB) was added. Staff were eligible to receive up to \$3000 based on scheduled hours. We are proud to report this has resulted in a positive retention rate increasing from 57% in 2020 to 83% in 2023.



**A letter mailed to TSLI from a former resident.**

Dear TSLI,

I would like to thank everyone for accepting me into the agency and giving me a chance. Thank you for believing in me. And giving me that push that I needed to be successful. I will always cherish you all. I love you and will keep you sacred in my heart. Love

Dear TSLI,

I would like to thank everyone for accepting me into the Agency and giving me a chance. Thank you for believing in me. And giving me that push that I needed to be successful. I will always cherish you all. I love you and will keep you sacred in my heart.

*A former TSLI Resident*



## Resident Michael Crochet Philanthropy



Michael

As Chedda Da Connect (American Hip Hop Rapper) once said, “look at the flicka da wrist.” I can relate to this as I have spent almost every day for the past few months crocheting as much as I can. Art therapy in the form of craft was something I was taught as a child by my grandma, Nana, long before I knew how important it could be to my long-term recovery as a person with mental illness. Crochet has become not only a way to cope with everyday stresses but to help heal my inner child. I remember how frustrating it was to learn how to work left-handed, now I’m free handing the types of projects I could only imagine completing at that age.

In early December 2023, as I did not have access to internet or TV, I was left with too much quiet and idle time and I knew I had to come up with a plan to keep my mind and thoughts occupied and focused. I decided to go back to my roots and pick up a couple of skeins of yarn and a new “I” crochet hook, fully expecting it would take me the weeks leading up to Christmas to make a scarf for each of my two roommates.

A day and a half later I had burned through that supply of yarn, but I knew I wasn’t done yet. I was “hooked” on crochet. In the weeks leading up to and after the holidays I challenged myself as much as I creatively could, making everything from scarves to blankets to shawls, to the trimmings for our Christmas tree and most importantly I got quite good at making hats, specifically children’s hats.

One morning in mid-December, when I was working on a vest, two staff were over for a site visit and had mentioned that newborn babies receive a handmade hat while they’re in the hospital. I thought this was a fantastic idea, considering it was a way to keep busy and also to be philanthropic.

By the time you’re reading this I will have made over 80 hats for the March of Dimes in January. Mission: Healthy Baby will then distribute these items to expectant military families.

Thanks to the support I receive from TSLI every day, I am doing well, staying focused and am looking forward to seeing just how many little heads I can help cover in 2024.



Crocheted  
Decorations



Crochet Hat



Newborn Hats

TSLI strives to be a diverse and inclusive workplace that values our staff and strives to make everyone feel equally involved in and supported in all areas of the workplace.

## Staff

32% of Workforce are Under-Represented Minority (URM)<sup>1</sup>

26% of Leadership Roles are URM

## Residents

55% Live in a Supervised Setting  
36% Live in an Apartment Setting  
9% Live in Supported Housing



**PROVIDING SERVICE TO OUR RESIDENTS IN COOPERATION WITH & GRANTS AWARDED BY...**



*Long Island Region COC*



<sup>1</sup> UNDERREPRESENTED MINORITY (URM) - IS DEFINED AS A U.S. CITIZEN WHO IDENTIFIES AS BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN, HISPANIC/LATINO, OR AMERICAN INDIAN. ALL OTHER RACE/ETHNICITY CATEGORIES OR NON-U.S. CITIZENS ARE CONSIDERED AS A NON-UNDERREPRESENTED MINORITY



# TSLI Pathways Program

Since 1977, TSLI has operated the Pathways Program which has provided safe, stable housing and support services to its 125 residents in Suffolk County (Long Island), New York. The Supervised Living Programs, located in Smithtown, Holtsville, Central Islip and on the grounds of Pilgrim Psychiatric Center in Brentwood, provide 24 hour supervision and support to residents. The Apartment Program sites, located in Brentwood, Holtsville, Port Jefferson and Ronkonkoma are staffed 7 days a week and are available on-call 24/7. All applicants are referred to the program via the Single Point of Access. Pathways' residents are assisted in a variety of skill areas in addition to housing, support and supervision.

Upon entry, residents work with staff to create a Service Plan which focuses on current needs and skills that will enable living at the most independent level possible. Goals and objectives are then established to help the residents develop these skills. Residents work individually, as well as in groups, to provide the best opportunity to become active community participants.

***Residents enjoying the Beach Picnic, Fall Picnic and Talent Show, Thanksgiving, and Independence Day.***

By offering events and celebrations the residents are encouraged to socialize both with each other and in the community.



## SERVING RESIDENTS

### WITH A DUAL DIAGNOSIS

Applicants may have a diagnosis of substance abuse secondary to their primary diagnosis of mental illness. Often, applicants are screened for placement in one of TSLI's two eight-bed units in the Building 70 site, which are designed to support their needs. Residents in these units receive intensive support to focus on managing the symptoms of their mental illness while simultaneously maintaining their sobriety. Due to the large number of dual diagnoses referrals, many are also served in other TSLI sites. All Pathways' Programs are able to provide a level of support for these residents.

In addition to implementing the Substance Abuse Prevention Policies and Procedures, TSLI ensures access to support services in the community for all Mentally Ill Chemically Addicted (MICA) residents. Substance abuse prevention goals may also be added to the residents' Service Plans (SP) to assist them to maintain their sobriety. These services may include transportation to substance abuse prevention meetings and to MICA clinical services.

### AOT

Applicants may also be court-ordered through Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) to secure housing with services. Without housing and services, these individuals would be at risk for living safely, as they have been considered a risk to themselves or to the community.

**TSLI's Pathways Program offers housing with individualized support services to chronically mentally ill adults. In order to be considered for admission, interested applicants must submit an application to the Single Point of Access (SPA).**

### Residents receive assistance in the following areas:

- Assertiveness Training
- Community Integration/Resource Development
- Daily Living Skills Training
- Health Services
- Medication Management and Training
- Rehabilitation Counseling and Skill Development Services
- Socialization
- Substance Abuse Prevention Services
- Symptom Management



Residents enjoying dinner together.

### Residents receive instruction in:

- Fire Safety and Exit Drills In The Home (EDITH)
- Personal Safety Education
- Smoking Cessation
- Dieting
- Exercise
- Healthy Eating
- Meal Planning and Food Shopping
- Money Management
- Entitlement Education
- Vocational Training and Education
- Community Integration



### Resident Survey (72% response):

Of those responding:

- 95% stated the program was clearly described to them.
- 95% stated staff respected their confidentiality.
- 93% stated staff treat them respectfully and respond quickly to problems.
- 93% responded they are involved in their goal and service planning.
- 93% stated staff are available to meet with them as needed.
- 92% stated their cultural beliefs are respected.
- 91% are satisfied with the staff support they receive to manage their medication.

In order to prepare for movement, each resident establishes a realistic discharge goal to achieve during their stay. A skills assessment is completed and a Service Plan is developed outlining the smaller steps needed to reach their discharge goal. Throughout their residency, staff work in consultation with residents' clinicians to improve their daily living skills and effectively manage their medical and mental health.

Many residents enter TSLI's Supervised Living Program with the plan of developing the necessary skills to graduate to TSLI's Apartment Program. While residing in the Supervised Living Program, staff focus on assisting residents to hone skills related to their health and safety, as improvement in these areas is paramount to their success in a less supervised setting.

Other residents look to TSLI's Supervised Living and Apartment Programs as a stepping stone to independent community living such as Section 8, Supported Housing and/or a private rental apartment. Regardless of their discharge goal, staff work with residents and their clinicians to assist them to secure housing which best suits their needs.

Once a resident has a viable residence to move into and a potential discharge date, program staff and the Discharge Department assists the resident to formulate a Discharge Plan. The Discharge Plan focuses on housing, clinical linkages, support services and finances. TSLI also provides follow-up services for discharged residents for a period of up to six months.

## Resident Movement: Pathways Programs

*The mission of the Pathways Program is to assist residents to develop their independent living skills so they may live in the least restricted environment possible.*

*In 2023, there were 34 admissions to the Pathways Program.*

### Occupancy

Supervised Program 91%  
Apartment Program 93%  
Supported Housing 92%

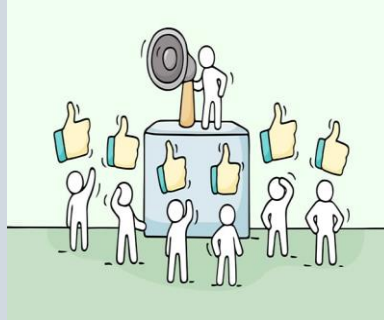
### Intake Stats

Dual Diagnosis 60%  
Generic 40%  
AOT 13%

## Internal Movement:

Six residents moved to a more independent setting.  
Six residents moved to a more supervised setting.  
Ten residents moved laterally.

## 136 Referrals were received in 2023:



34 Referrals were accepted into the Pathways Program

### Dispositions:

Accepted 25%  
Denied 16%  
Withdrew 50%  
Returned 6%  
Pending 3%

## Discharge Placements

35 Residents discharged from TSLI Pathways in 2023

Family 26%	Supported Housing 23%
Independent Housing 14%	Supervised CR 6%
Apartment Treatment Program 6%	Hospitals 6%
Unknown 6%	Deceased 6%
Room and Board 2%	Adult Homes 2%
Nursing Home 2%	

## Summit Program Outcomes

92% of residents  
maintained their housing

8% of residents  
maintained employment

100% of residents worked  
on managing the  
symptoms of their  
mental illness

83% of residents attained  
at least one objective in  
their Service Plan

50% of residents with a  
substance abuse history  
remained sober

Admissions: 2 referrals  
were accepted to the  
Summit Program.

Discharges:  
1 resident moved to  
Independent Housing



# TSLI Summit: A Supportive Housing Program

Established in 1993, the TSLI Summit Program provides permanent Supportive Housing with support services. Summit assists individuals and families faced with homelessness.

Summit serves both Severe and Persistent Mental Illness (SPMI) and MICA individuals and families in community-based homes. In 2023, the Summit Program provided housing and services to twelve individuals, as well as one family. In January 2023, TSLI Summit began receiving Medicaid reimbursement for monthly services provided by staff. This ensures the residents are receiving Service Planning, which has been added to the review process completed by the Medicaid Compliance Officer.

Residents apply for housing in the Summit Program via SPA and Coordinated Entry. Case management and support services are provided along with permanent housing. Staff conduct site visits with the residents at least monthly to provide support services to help them to succeed in functioning independently in the community.

The Summit Program focuses on goals to assist the residents. These include registering school-age children in school and developing skills in the areas of parenting, household management, symptom management, money management, health maintenance, self-advocacy, community integration (including maintaining necessary health and psychiatric linkages) and developing educational and vocational skills. In compliance with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), TSLI follows Housing First principles when screening its applicants; this ensures that low barrier criteria for admission are considered.

## WITH OUR THANKS...

Transitional Services of New York for Long Island, Inc. thanks the following corporations, small businesses, and private citizens for the gifts of their time and thoughtful donations throughout the year.



*CINTAS  
Sock Donation*



*Clearvision Associates  
Toiletries Donation*

TSLI will continue to provide needed assistance to the residents in our housing programs due to the generosity of the Long Island community. We thank you for your support of TSLI's mission and look forward to your continued support.



*Donaldson's Subaru  
Sock Donation*

Donations were received in memory of a resident, Donald.

Contributions can be made at our website <https://tsli-hhb.org> as a one time or monthly donation.

Donations can be dedicated in honor of an individual.



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TSLI/HHB 33rd Annual  
Human Services Award Celebration  
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